

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

FREDERICK ASHTON

by BERYL DE ZOETE

THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—I

by ARCHIMEDES

VIRGINIA WOOLF

by MARTIN TURNELL

THE PETRIFIED MAN

by EUDORA WELTY

THE ART OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

by T. D. KENDRICK

POEMS *by* LORD BERNERS, GAVIN EWART, DYLAN THOMAS,
NORMAN CAMERON

REVIEW *by* GEORGE ORWELL

REPRODUCTIONS *of* ANGLO-SAXON ART

MONTHLY: ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE NET

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Edited by Cyril Connolly

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ROUTLEDGE

HORIZON

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COMMENT

Horizon is a literary magazine. Many numbers have coincided in their appearance with national disasters, and have chosen to ignore them. We have ignored them because, having expressed what we felt to be the causes of these débâcles at the time of Dunkirk, there seemed no point in recalling them. Our rôle is to play our instrument a little louder and a little better, like a ship's orchestra, as our vessel blunders from rock to rock.

It is possible that when this number appears Egypt will have been saved, but even so the loss of Libya and the debates in Parliament reveal once again those weaknesses which may lose us India, or the Second Front, or even, if the war is won for us, lose us the peace, as Italy lost it in 1918. It is clear that what we need to win the war is a new ruling class, a class which is confident in its mission and its power, confident in the means it employs, and confident that it represents the people, that its aims are theirs, and that its authority derives from their will, and can be handed back to them. Such a class can only exist where there is a people worthy of it, since it depends more directly on the people than any other, and therefore its members are most likely to be found where the people exist who are competent to produce them, that is to say, in the armed forces or the factories. Such a class can recruit for itself many members of the old ruling class, of the old political parties, of the Civil Service, since the only qualification needed for it is that blend of intelligence, energy and imagination, which is found in every ruling class at the moment when it seizes power, and which has so sadly deteriorated in our own, where there is too great a remove from the source of energy, where character and intellect (to mention one example), instead of being mutually encouraged as part of the same thing, have been unnaturally opposed to each other, and where the need for security has made the intelligent timid, and the bold outlawed.

The simplest way to arrive at such a ruling class would be to apply a principle of superannuation throughout all our national life by giving everyone in a responsible position a triple test—psychological, to test their imagination, adaptability, common sense, like the pattern-tests used in the army; intelligent, to see whether they belong to the modern world or whether they pine for the *Morning Post*, and the old green

Westminster; and of character, by, for example, setting fire to a newspaper and seeing what steps they take to put it out.

The new class, once referred to here as the 'democratic élite of the efficient', would not produce public figures on a scale to rank with the old because they would realize that myth-building is a handicap to their work, and that saturation is so easily reached in these things, that the public is as quickly tired of a cigar as of an umbrella. They would amalgamate the three services because they would not have been in them long enough to have been conditioned to permanent jealousy. They would abolish such anomalies as the 'Wavy Navy', which confers a distinctive badge and the certainty of never being promoted beyond Commander on the sailor who is a conscript, a pre-war volunteer, or unwilling to pursue the career all his life. They would substitute 'Why not?' for the 'Why' which masks the envy and ossification that piles up in offices and committees. Such a class would involve neither an age war nor a social war, for ability would be the only introduction to it. It would even be better if it had no name. It is gradually coming forward, but in many other periods of our history, with mobs who broke windows and parliaments who impeached, it would have been here already, and on our ability to bring such a class to the fore depends our biological ability to survive. For we live in an imperfect world. History punishes the ignorant and mistaken: the wicked are left to punish themselves.

What can artists and writers do to hasten this transfer of power from those who possess it to those who deserve it? We have a double mission. The first is a mission to help both rulers and ruled towards modern thinking, to dissipate the suspicion in which the intellect is held, and to help the brains which are so sadly needed towards the positions they should occupy. Since we can only gain victory in a total war by employing total methods there is a task to be done in preventing this totalitarianism from infecting our ideology, and hence our propaganda. Those who fight this war and come into too close contact with what we are fighting are in constant danger of infection, as are surgeons from X-ray burns, or septicæmia. The intellectuals can supply a bath of disinfectant. Otherwise we may wake up one day to find we have lost all our liberties in order that our trains may run on time.

The second mission of our artists and writers is to produce art, to make our culture into something worth fighting for, full of the beauty and the clarity for which we are prepared to fight ourselves. Our greatest mental obstruction to fighting this war properly is not our rusty class barriers, nor even our political divisions into Left and Right, but our pacifism, and lazy complacency which continue to tell us that war is both wrong and obsolete, and that therefore it is all an

unreal nightmare. We have to realize that war should have been obsolete and wrong, but that we failed to make it so, and that in this respect we are all guilty, and can have no happiness until we have succeeded where we failed. Our artists must look ahead to the time when this is accomplished, when our culture can take its place as the clearing-house for the ideas of America and the ideas of the Continent, to which is added the originality of our own. We are apt to forget in our rawness as a totalitarian war-state and in our guilt and despondency over our inadequacies, and our consequent infatuation with Russia and Austerity hair-shirt, that we have been for centuries a great inventive power. Our two greatest inventions have been our political system and our national literature, and they were created out of the wisdom and richness, and imagination and variety which once characterized us, and of which it is time we were reminded. It would do a world of good if our writers and artists set themselves to combat, in their production, that terrible Puritanism which is always welling up in us, and which makes for philistinism and sterility by causing the destruction of those opposites which it fears, instead of integrating them into a healthy society. 'Else a great prince in prison lies.'

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Archimedes (the family is an old one) is directly descended from that Archimedes who cried 'give me where to stand and I will change the world'. His essay is divided into four parts, which will come out in consecutive numbers. Part I, which appears here, shows the war as the most critical stage of a far greater transformation of society. The immediate drive is to a consciously controlled productive organization to win for man the best biological and social environment. It shows how political forms and human rights have meaning only in relation to such an organization. Part II is largely philosophical, Part III historical, and Part IV concerned with the relation of knowledge and action, and of the morality needed to build the new world. Eudora Welty is a new American writer from the South. This is her first story to be published in England (from her book, *A Curtain of Green*, Doubleday Doran, New York) and Katharine Anne Porter writes of it, 'A fine clinical study of vulgarity, vulgarity absolute, chemically pure, exposed mercilessly to its final sub-human depths.'

In the last Comment the question 'Do you prefer the seventeenth to the eighteenth century?' was political, and referred to its Absolutism as opposed to the ideas of 1789.

LORD BERNERS

THE PERFORMING MUSHROOM

(To Professor Jebb, author of *Inedible Fungi*, *The Toadstool*
and all about it, etc., etc.)

To walk the tight-rope on a spider's web
Above the ditch where squats the humble toad
Who gasps and gapes and opens wide his eyes,
And swells to many times his normal size
'neath wattled hedge beside the moonlit road,
Just so, Professor Jebb.

To balance nimbly on the mouse's back
And canter round and round the mossy track,
Waving the Tricolour and Union Jack:
To bow, all smiles, acknowledging the febrile
shouts of pale enthusiastic tiers
Of water-newts, and other little dears
And You, Professor Jebb.

To have one's portrait in the Picture News,
To be invited by a lovely debutante
to autograph an album page.
That is pleasant also, and the rage
of clumsy toadstools no one will engage,
Who vent their wrath in spiteful interviews
With You, Professor Jebb.

To rest upon one's laurels late in life,
To settle down with children and a wife,
Enjoying wealth amassed by honest toil
And then, when life has ceased to ebb,
To die at home and fertilize the soil,
While other mushrooms fry in boiling oil
For You, Professor Jebb.

SURREALIST LANDSCAPE

(To Salvador Dali)

On the pale yellow sands
Where the Unicorn stands
And the Eggs are preparing for Tea
Sing Thirty
Sing Forty
Sing Three.

On the pale yellow sands
 There stands
 A Commode
 That has nothing to do with the case.
 Sing Eighty
 Sing Ninety
 Sing Three.
 On the pale yellow sands
 There's a Dorian Mode
 And a Temple all covered with Lace
 And a Gothic Erection of Urgent Demands
 On the Patience of You and of Me.

REQUEST TO LEDA

Not your winged lust but his must now change suit.
The harp-waked Casanova rakes no range.
The worm is (pin-point) rational in the fruit.

Not girl for bird (gourd being man) breaks root.
Taking no plume for index in love's change
Not your winged lust but his must now change suit.

Desire is phosphorous: the chemic bruit
Lust bears like volts, who'll amplify, and strange
The worm is (pin-point) rational in the fruit.

NORMAN CAMERON

THE DIRTY LITTLE ACCUSER

Who invited him in? What was he doing here,
That insolent little ruffian, that crapulous lout?
When he quitted a sofa, he left behind him a smear.
My wife says he even tried to paw her about.

What was worse, if, as often happened, we caught him out
Stealing or pinching the maid's backside, he would leer,
With a cigarette on his lip and a shiny snout,
With a hint: 'You and I are all in the same galère.'

Yesterday we ejected him, nearly by force,
To go on the parish, perhaps, or die of starvation;
As to that, we agreed, we felt no kind of remorse.

Yet there's this check on our righteous jubilation:
Now that the little accuser is gone, of course,
We shall never be able to answer his accusation.

GAVIN EWART

OFFICERS' MESS

It's going to be a thick night to-night (and the night before was a thick one);
I've just seen the Padre disappearing into 'The Cock and Bull' for a quick one.
I don't mind telling you this, old boy, we got the Major drinking—
You probably know the amount of gin he's in the habit of sinking—
And then that new M.O. came in, the Jewish one, awful fellow,
And his wife, a nice little bit of stuff, dressed in a flaming yellow.
Looked a pretty warmish piece, old boy—no, have this one with me—
They were both so blind (and so was the Major) that they could hardly see.
She had one of those amazing hats and a kind of silver fox fur
(I wouldn't mind betting several fellows have had a go at her).
She made a bee-line for the Major, bloody funny, old boy,
Asked him a lot about horses and India, you know, terribly coy—
And this M.O. fellow was mopping it up and at last he passed right out
(Some silly fool behind his back put a bottle of gin in his stout).
I've never seen a man go down so quick. Somebody drove him home.
His wife was almost as bad, old boy, said she felt all alone
And nestled up to the Major—it's a great pity you weren't there—
And the Padre was arguing about the order of morning and evening prayer.
Never laughed so much in all my life. We went on drinking till three.
And this woman was doing her best to sit on the Major's knee!
Let's have the blackout boards put up and turn on the other light.
Yes, I think you can count on that, old boy—to-night'll be a thick night.

BERYL DE ZOETE
FREDERICK ASHTON

BACKGROUND OF A CHOREOGRAPHER

'We met Frederick Ashton. I am always asking Alice Toklas do you think he is a genius, she does have something happen when he is a genius, so I always ask her is he a genius, being one it is natural that I should think a great deal about that thing in any other one.'

'He and I talked about a great deal on meeting, and I think he is one, more likely than any one we have seen for a long time. He was born in Peru and was for three years when a young boy in a monastery and his parents were both English but he does not know what it is to be a Peruvian and that made it possible for him to do what he did with Four Saints to make a religious procession sway and slowly disappear without moving, perhaps being a Peruvian will help him with A Wedding Bouquet.' —'Everybody's Autobiography.' Gertrude Stein.

IT certainly did. The weddings so beloved by Fred Ashton and his nurse in Lima and all the rich gossip of those interiors where ladies sat and fanned themselves after dinner, relieved of their long corsets, and the parrot joined in the prayers and sighs ('Ay Jesus Maria y José'!) played quite a large part in the composition of that exquisitely witty and moving ballet. But 'being a Peruvian' only helped because of 'being a genius'. This essay is an attempt to bring the two aspects together. But it must begin with a question. How is it that Fred Ashton in the most fertile period of his creative life is no longer composing ballets? How is that when many painters, actors, musicians, producers, entertainers, editors, and a certain kind of dancer have been reserved, because they are considered to contribute in some way to our much diminished cultural life or to sustain our morale, the most important English choreographer, from whom the war has drawn three magnificent ballets, was not compelled to remain at his post, and with him the body of dancers essential to his ballets? The answer, I fear, is not the necessities of war but indifference to one of the greatest arts in which the spirit and body of man find expression. The English of all classes enjoy displays of physical skill and therefore enjoy dancing, but dancing here is not an art essential to life as

it is in Russia; it has no important social and religious function as in some distant lands which have not suffered the privileges of an industrial civilization. Dance personalities are indeed almost as popular here as actors or boxers, but that dancing should be more than the display of a dancer's personality, that choreography should be an inspiration and incentive to the finest human faculties is beyond the comprehension of the dance-uncultured rulers of England. Yet Jooss's *Green Table* showed ten years ago with what intense and electrifying power the agony of a whole period of human history may be mutely interpreted by the movement of a ballet.

A true choreographer is not just a more or less ingenious arranger of dances or ballets, but an artist in whose imagination every experience of life is somehow transformed into the movement of dancing bodies. What he looks at, what he suffers or enjoys, myriads of unconscious impressions, help to build up the store of rhythms out of which he will later create his ballets. A poet's medium is in his own mind, the painter can work alone with line and colour, the musician with tones and rhythms; but a choreographer can only work in the medium of other bodies on which he must impose his design and from whom he must demand complete docility as well as a very specialized and highly developed technique; to whom he must devote as Noverre pointed out in his famous 'Lettres sur la Danse', addressed to Voltaire, at least as perfect and watchful a care as a *maître de manège* to his horses. The complicity of choreographer and dancers is therefore a subtle and essential one. They are the material of his composition which he has probably helped to shape during years of ceaseless work. A ballet company is a living whole which cannot be dismembered without considerable loss; it is like a grove of young trees at various stages of their growth; some only beginning to sprout, with but slight indications of their character and identity, some perfectly formed but sufficiently flexible to be bent into new channels of expression.

Of course a choreographer is not necessarily an innovator. Any experienced *maître de ballet* will certainly be capable of composing quite interesting sequences of steps in an old tradition, which with exceptional dancers, well chosen music and striking décor will charm and even excite the spectator. He may, however, be a creative and experimental spirit, restlessly intent on imposing on

the human material of his dancers the shapes of his adventurous mind. Such a choreographer is Frederick Ashton, of whom one of his closest collaborators has said 'All his choreographic life and wherever he has been Fred was assimilating knowledge; his acute observation never missed anything, and every place he visited and every person he saw enriched his mind and added to the store of creation in him, from which he could always draw something new'. But an artist's life does not begin with the moment when he first visibly creates; so we come back to 'being a Peruvian' and what it meant to Frederick Ashton.

He was born about 1906 in the Ecuadorial, Equatorial city of Guayaquil, where his father was consul. Before he even became a Peruvian he had made a journey to England with his parents, and distinctly remembers a Lord Mayor's procession in which Lord Kitchener rode behind the royal coach of King Edward and Queen Alexandra. At the age of two even this half-hearted pageant (compared with what were to come) was memorable. But it was at Lima at the age of three, and with an earthquake, that his real childhood began, and the particular interweaving of lightness, sombreness and ritual which distinguishes his choreography owes so much to his Peruvian upbringing that I must tell, with his help, some of the influences which made a profound impression on him. All his childhood with its pageantry, religious and secular, had as background the sea, to which he is still passionately addicted; 'years of sunshine and beautiful bathing, sometimes in and out of the water from morn to moon-rise, having our last dip as the huge moon rose in the black sky'. Everybody loved bathing; 'nuns in long trousers, every part of them covered, hanging on to a rope like vultures and being bashed about by the huge breakers . . . priests fat and floating like porpoises, with pursed lips and their tonsures showing above the waves'. Only the octopus and tidal waves produced by earthquakes intimidated the reckless and precocious children of Lima. S. Peter shared their passion for the sea. 'On his saint-days he would have himself transported out in a boat to fish—always a magnificent catch—and would return to proceed through the flower-scattered streets with the fish flopping against his baroque carved robes. As a child I loved that feast almost as much as Santa Rosa de Lima's. That was a great day, very crowded and full of pilgrimages, ending with the cathedral, where we would be

shown an immortal Santa Rosa lying in a glass coffin and breathing, crowned with roses and difficult to imagine that she whipped herself, locked a tight chain round her waist and threw the key down a well. . . . I was disgusted years later to find an almost identical figure at Mme. Tussaud's: the Sleeping Beauty. After these processions we always rushed down to bathe'.

Fred Ashton was fortunate in having a genuine Peruvian upbringing. Like the native little high-class boys of Lima he attended whichever Escuela was favoured by the sons of the President of the moment—in his case, Dominican. Morbid results of inquisitorial punishments were like everything else washed away in the sea. As the only *rubio* among so many dark faces he was chosen to serve the bishop at High Mass, and held the salver on which were placed his jewels, ring and stole when changing vestments. 'I liked doing these ceremonies and I learnt to time things rightly and to make effects at leisure, and the proper times for climaxes and the whole rightful measure of things and the ecstasy of ritual. That is why I did *Four Saints* well, because the action was not operatic but ritualistic and ordered, and not balletic but ceremonial, and never has any production had the beautiful leisure of a procession with its pauses, when the lifting of a hand and raised eyebrows were dramatic. It was the strangest and most beautiful production, I say this though I made it, because I am devout and the negroes are devout and I am plastic and they are plastic. At first I tried to make them copy me exactly and then I found it a great mistake, so I did a pose or gesture and said Now do that, and they would do something quite different but full of the beauty of their own skinny plasticity, and their heads would fall always harmoniously and they were never gawky, and though strange always harmonious.' This was twenty years later, but we see how it grew out of being a Peruvian in 1913.

The children of Lima played in an Inca graveyard, called Huaca Juliana, and the Inca princess would ride there in the middle of the night, and skulls with wiry hair would be turned up on its sandy floor. Behind it rose tremendous landscapes lit by melancholy sunsets, and from the songs of his half-Inca nurse he imbibed a love of melancholy which still mingles, characteristically for a Latin, with his wit and gaiety. He remembers too the lovely hand gestures of an old sewing-woman as she turned her wheel, the altar to Buddha of their Japanese butler who was

suspected of being a spy for the odd reason that in an earthquake he appeared in a lovely blue and gold kimono among the drab English dressing-gowns; the English beachcombers who would repay his father's hospitality by raping a housemaid and making off with some money; the bi-monthly receptions of his mother, a diplomatic hostess, when the streets would be lined with carriages and 'elegant ladies rather plump in slit skirts, enormous hats and tango shoes would all pour into our house, and the Chinese Minister would arrive with a Japanese wife and gradually empty the rooms because no one could stand his poppy scent; the waisted bejewelled men and the Kaiser's ex-mistress in coffee lace, who came back from Europe with blonde hair and wonderful gestures and photogenic attitudes'.

But the climax of his life in Lima was the visit of Anna Pavlova when he was ten or eleven. He watched her step into a cab after the performance, and noted that she walked like a bird. From that moment he was haunted by his vocation, for nature had made him a dancer. Mme. Rambert tells how when seven years later she put through his paces the rather unpromising devotee of dancing sent to her by Massine, she discovered that he had lovely feet of the quality of Pavlova's and a strange beauty of gesture. About thirteen years after he first saw her, Anna Pavlova herself saw Fred Ashton's *Capriol Suite* at a charity matinée, the first thing that won him recognition, and sent for him. He spent a whole afternoon in her enchanting company; she discussed with him projects of ballets and invited his collaboration. But she went on a tour in Holland, and died. Some one has written about this: 'I think that his meeting with Pavlova, whom he worshipped, and the disappointment of not working with her, as he would have done had she not died, made a great impression on him, and to her he was a symbol of the dancing future and she unconsciously blessed him. Through the links of Pavlova and exquisite Karsavina and Lopokova he caught the knot of the woven traditions of ballet, and the patterns took on a new shape in his eager brain.'

But we must go back to the moment immediately after the war when from being a Peruvian he was supposed to change into being an Englishman. Three years at Dover College did succeed in twisting the free, uninhibited child of the sun into a modest, retiring creature whose gestures were thought effeminate and style affected. But the time was not altogether wasted.

Friendship with a master who seems to have shared his taste for Edwardian beauties opened to him the sixth form library and he began to read the English poets. He also began to act, and played Lydia Languish at the Dover Town Hall, in a creation of yellow lace given by the father of a friend, a Nottingham lace magnate. Inability to pass exams. saved him from a diplomatic career, and he was pushed into the city at eighteen. Out of his salary of thirty shillings a week he spent a guinea on a private lesson with Massine. But the frustrated desire to dance made him ill, and at last his mother's resistance broke down and he was allowed to adopt dancing as a profession. It was then that Massine, himself on tour, sent him to Mme. Rambert. The years he spent with her from 1925 to 1930 were an important period in his creative life. She not only taught him to dance; she appreciated his great musicality and unusual sense of style, as well as his devotion to the passion of her own life. She overcame his diffidence and encouraged him to compose. She needed male dancers, she needed a choreographer; she revealed his gifts to him and he certainly gave them back to her, for all her early ballets were composed by him. If he was too often, as she said, 'passionately lazy', a fellow-dancer tells us that 'once he started to work on a ballet he would keep going at rehearsals with incredible energy and vitality. The rehearsals were sometimes made more exhausting by a great deal of laughter, as his quick tongue was never still, and he would go to any lengths to get the right feeling from the dancers; many a time much to the horror of the "dancing mammas" who have always done so much to restrict and keep down any sign of temperament or feeling in their wretched daughters'. It was in Mme. Rambert's studio that Fred Ashton met Sophie Fedorovitch, who has designed so many of his décors and costumes. To her he declares that he owes his subsequent career, for she believed in him so much that she made it possible for him to continue at a time when his fortunes were at the lowest ebb.

An important landmark was his being accepted, in 1928 or 1929, in the company which Ida Rubinstein had formed in Paris to tour the European capitals, with Nijinska and Massine as choreographers. Ashton appeared in a pas-de-quatre with Lichine, Shabelvsky and Rupert Doone. Most important of all he learned his craft from Massine and fed passionately on the artistic treasures

of Italy. Billy Chappell, who accompanied him, has written me about this tour and what it meant to Fred. It is a touching tribute of one dancer to another. 'He had, the whole year we were away, a kind of unconsciously crusading spirit, as though he knew he was building up the foundations of the career that flowered so beautifully later, and where I was driven into a kind of childish hysteria by the lyrical sunshine of Naples and spring in the South of France, and by looking all ways at once saw nothing; this same lyrical sunshine was making shapes of the shadows and bringing out the patterns of trees and the unexpected gestures of people, all of which his mind was seizing and savouring and taking in to the smallest detail, to bring out later when the moment arose. He imbibed so much from the teaching of Nijinska and Massine, being affected by them not in a purely derivative way but only receiving the things that pupils of genius take from their early masters. He has always seemed to me to have an extraordinary capacity for being influenced by the great choreographers and then carrying that influence much further than the original had ever been able to do. . . . You can imagine how on top of all the heat and revolutions and mysticism and tropic quality of his Peruvian childhood (all came out in *Rio Grande* and the Brazilian in *Façade*) this crazy, half-starved tour of the great opera houses made a deep and lasting impression on him: rehearsing in one of the lounges in the Scala, seeing Vienna in the snow, Naples in the spring, dancing in that haunted Paris Opera House, and rehearsing in the same rooms in Monte Carlo which had seen the creation of so many of the Diaghilev ballets'.

In 1930 began Fred Ashton's association with the Camargo Society, which, like Mme. Rambert's Ballet Club, was a forcing-ground for Sadler's Wells. His most important contact here was Constant Lambert, whose intelligence, immense musical knowledge and plastic sense have made him so far more than a conductor to the Sadler's Wells Ballet—a perfect and indispensable collaborator of every choreographer. Now began the long series of ballets for Sadler's Wells, broken only by that important visit to America in 1933, when Virgil Thomson invited him to produce his opera on Gertrude Stein's text, 'Four Saints in Three Acts', with a negro cast, which he regards as one of his most significant productions; most of us know it only by two illustrations in the April number of *Theatre Arts*, 1934, and by Stark

Young's article in the same paper, in which he makes an interesting if rather involved analysis of Ashton's creative use of pictorial tradition. This subject would need a whole article to itself; it is certainly a fascinating one. I can only refer here to the further illustration provided by *The Wise Virgins*. It is related to his fine sense of his particular medium and its limitations, which prevents him from ever attempting to translate literally from one medium into another. For instance, to take another Biblical ballet, it is certain that if Fred Ashton had composed a ballet on Job he would never have allowed it to become an accessory even to so nobly expressive an illustration as Blake's. Nor, I think, would he have concentrated in Satan the dynamism which in the Book of Job streams from the whole tremendous imagery of the poem. He would undoubtedly have produced in the element of ballet something of the whirlwind of creation.

His unerring sense of the peculiar medium of ballet prevents him, though himself a brilliant mime, from allowing miming to encroach on dancing. It is in this direction that the Sadler's Wells Ballet is now tending (it has even invaded the abstract inferno of his own *Dante Sonata*), and it is to counteract this trend that his presence would above all be valuable. This is not the place, even if I had the ability, to define the boundary between mime and dancing, which is in any case better demonstrated on the stage than in words. It would be most interesting to see Ashton's version of the theme on which Helpmann has composed his stupendous thriller 'Hamlet'. In 1940 Ashton was actually meditating a ballet on the *Tempest*, also to Tchaikowsky's music, which the then reduced resources of the Sadler's Wells Ballet prevented him from realizing. It was replaced by his greatest ballet *The Wanderer*. And now that Ninette de Valois and her collaborators have triumphed over enormous difficulties and achieved an unparalleled financial success, the choreographer Frederick Ashton is lacking. I still hope that the estimable adage *Il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire* may get for once into an appropriate context; that the R.A.F. will at least pretend that Pilot Officer Frederick Ashton is not indispensable to it and give him back to English ballet.

ARCHIMEDES THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—I

THE WAR

The war we are now fighting is not only the greatest but the most important war that has ever been fought. It is the most terrible and at the same time the most hopeful of wars. Something is happening in the world now that is altogether new and of a different kind from any happening of the past. We cannot accept the struggles and miseries of today as they have been accepted heretofore. We know too well that they are not the result of blind fate or the vengeance of an offended god. We know even that they are only in part the results of human folly. Most people, without understanding very deeply what is happening, do sense something different, do see vaguely that behind the raids and battles lie other greater and more enduring changes. They realize that the whole framework of life is altering so much that not only is the world unlike what it was before the war, but that it will never be like that again. This is not merely an English or German or Russian viewpoint, it spreads over the whole of mankind. It is now apparent to all that we are witnessing the end of an age and the beginning of a new one. The change that is occurring is more important than any that has happened for many thousands of years: indeed as far back as history records. One reason for the struggle and confusion is that it is too big a change to be fully grasped, even by the people who are bringing it about. Yet any hope for a speedy and good issue from our present troubles lies precisely in realizing what is happening and what is our part in the process.

THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

A great social transformation has been taking place in the past four hundred years. For the first time human beings are beginning to control the conditions of their lives—the whole human environment—consciously through the use of science. An enormous mechanical apparatus of material production and distribution is already in being. But it has been built up in the

framework of the old civilization, fundamentally traditional and unscientific, the pillars of which were private property and State authority, and in which the only forms of international relations were trade and war. The gigantic growth of productive powers is now cracking and tearing to pieces this old framework. It has visibly failed to provide, indeed it was intrinsically incapable of providing for the extent of co-operative planning required for the working of the modern productive machine, and the result of its failure has been a series of ever increasing crises. These have at last broken down into a war which is in itself becoming the main concern of almost the whole population of the world, and is already absorbing more than half their productive capacities. Things cannot and will not go on like this. The realization of new human possibilities for winning a good life for all is now reinforced by the knowledge that they are not only possibilities but necessities; they are the only alternatives to increasing poverty, insecurity and death. Men must work all together if they are not to spend their lives and strength killing each other.

HUMAN UNITY

The new age is showing a new awareness of the unity of all human societies and of the practical possibility of co-operative human effort in satisfying all their needs. Both unity and co-operation have been made possible directly and indirectly by the growth and application of science. They are due to the increasing of communication and economic interdependence and to the world-wide triumph of the industrial revolution. What is new now is not these things themselves so much as the fact that people are becoming consciously aware of them. A hundred years ago Marx and Engels saw them as clearly as we see them today, but they were almost alone then, and their ideas have had to fight for recognition through years when to outside appearances they bore little relation to facts. The nineteenth-century Liberals saw nothing odd in looking forward to the steady and and eventless evolution of free trade economics in a world where everything was for the best because everyone was seeking his own profit in the most intelligent way. They were proved wrong by the actual and necessary historical development of Liberal capitalism. On one side there was the growth of an organized and potentially revolutionary working class; on the other, the

irresistible tendency, in the pursuit of larger and safer profits, towards monopoly, imperialism, fascism and war.

PLANNED ECONOMY

Today the situation is very different. It takes an effort to accept the old Liberal view. Now, in wartime, we are coming naturally to think and act in terms of directed economic and social organization. The relics of the past are still with us, preventing the adoption of rational solutions to urgent national problems and perverting these solutions everywhere to private ends; but in so far as such interests do interfere, they bring their own destruction. Already national efficiency, which means conscious social organization, is a condition of national survival. The fall of France has shown this well enough. In every industrial region of the world today—and non-industrial countries can have no effective say in world affairs—there exists a form of planned economy determining the quantity and quality of production, fixing the movements and the occupations of the population. More and more the capitalist States are showing an external similarity, in their means of control of production and distribution, to the planned socialist economy of the Soviet Union.

They still fail to equal its achievements even with greater material and technical resources, because their economy cannot make a fully integral plan or liberate the full constructive ability of the working class.

THE NEED FOR CONSCIOUS UNDERSTANDING

For most people the consciousness of the meaning of these events is lagging behind the events themselves. Yet that consciousness is not an inert and academic thing: it is a vital and overwhelmingly powerful factor in shaping events. Hitler and his hidden allies among the United Nations know only too well that once that consciousness is general, nothing can prevent the ultimate establishment of a democratically organized—that is, of a Socialist—world order. Hence the frantic attempts to build up exclusive and aggressive nationalist feeling in order to prevent the realization of this wider concept. But there is no room left for a world of independent rival national States. The only apparent alternatives now are world domination by force or world co-operative organization.

In reality there is no alternative, because domination by force is practically impossible, and would not be stable if it were achieved.

Yet although an increasing number of people have realized in their broad essentials what the immediate possibilities are, and although there is an underlying agreement about them which goes far wider than many national and class boundaries, there has been extraordinarily little explicit statement of the nature of the present transformation, or of what is needed to effect it more rapidly and with the least destruction and misery. For many hundreds of years thoughtful men have drawn pictures of good states of society. All these Utopias have faithfully reflected both the conscious aspirations and the unconscious assumptions of the age in which they were written. But what we want now is not a Utopia, indeed we know that social transformations are not to be achieved by making blueprints and attempting to copy them in actuality. What we need is an understanding of the processes of the working and transformation of societies, sufficient to enable us to see which things are worth attempting and which are doomed because of the inherent contradictions which they contain. For example, however well balanced the constitution of a State may appear to be on paper, if it so arranged that one class has a definite advantage over others, that class is bound either to sweep away or to evade its constitutional limitations and to generate among the rest of the population an antagonism that sooner or later comes to revolution or war. Plato's Republic or the Liberal Utopias of the last century were full of contradictions of this kind.

IDEALS AND POSSIBILITY

It is, therefore, not our first business to set up ideals, though we may recognize that the ideals already embodied in human society represent powerful forces. For instance, although abstract justice is hard to define, the feeling of injustice and the demand for justice can be recognized as great moving forces which will always turn against any deliberately fostered privileges or inequalities. It will be found that by setting out only that which is possible, a great deal of what is recognized as desirable and good must be included. It might be argued that the converse is also true—that by setting up what is desirable and good, we create the need which will establish these as necessities. But

this does not prove to be the case. The whole of early Christian effort was towards the establishment of a kingdom of God which would realize the full flowering of human virtue. This attempt was abandoned many hundreds of years ago by the religious themselves, who were driven by the very development of a commercially based society, which they did not understand, to limiting virtue to the conduct of private affairs. The men of the enlightenment of the eighteenth century struggled for a different ideal: an ideal of liberty in which everyone was secured in the position in full freedom of political and of economic action in so far as he could pay his way. That ideal came more near to being realized, but the way of reaching it led past it to monopoly, capitalism and the Fascist State.

There is still a tendency to begin with the rights, and, rather more rarely, with the duties of the individual, and having set these out, to demand the kind of State that will realize them. This was all very well in the times of the great English and French revolutions, when the assertion of individual rights against feudal status was of paramount importance; but it has no meaning in the modern world where the first problem is to establish a social and economic organization which can at least provide food and clothing for its citizens and save them from the constant threat of death or slavery. This does not mean that the demand for human rights is abandoned. On the contrary, it means that they can only be secured by first attending to the shape of society as a whole. The Soviet Constitution not only guarantees the liberal rights of equality before the law, but also the new rights of employment, of education and of security in illness and in old age; but such a Constitution could only be drawn up after the achievement of a socially operated and controlled productive system. The four freedoms of President Roosevelt—Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear, have not as yet the same reality, precisely because they lack the economic and political basis that could secure and guarantee them.

THE BEST HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL

The general object of human society, which can be realized only by our becoming conscious of it, is, in scientific terms, the establishment of the best possible biological and social environment

for every man, woman and child. A good biological environment means for human beings what for years past it has meant for domestic animals—plenty of good and agreeable food, freedom from excessive heat or cold, a pleasant atmosphere to work and play in, security from the attack of all avoidable diseases, and medical treatment for all unavoidable ones. All these things are the common human birthright, and, owing to the war, they are beginning to be generally recognized as such. That all men should have to fight for food, that some men should starve, that children should grow up stunted and diseased, that conditions of work should make that work a misery, that old age should be passed in pinched anxiety, are now seen not only as avoidable evils but also as intolerable handicaps to an effective social life. To put it in its lowest terms, a country which allows such conditions cannot be making full use of its manpower. Any farmer who treated his animals so would be working to his own loss. But once this is admitted as a human birthright, all the compulsive sanctions of capitalist economy fall away. In a Socialist State new sanctions take their place. Work is a social responsibility. The right to work and the right to good living and working conditions implies the obligation to work of all who can.

The securing of the best biological environment is only half the story. The social environment is, in fact, more immediately important than the physical one. Unless a man is starving, freezing, ill or wounded—and often even then—he is more affected by how he stands with other people than by his physical sufferings. To have a place in society and be recognized and approved, to feel that one's work is valued, to be able to enjoy companionship, to have a sense of security in family relationships and respect in old age, are actual necessities more keenly felt than most physical ones. A sense of grievance or inferiority, a lack of hope for oneself or one's children, are social conditions as destroying as most diseases. Good social environment implies the absence of such evils; but it implies more. It implies a positive consciousness in all men and women of working together for the common good, so that each sees his reward in his fellows' approbation. It implies, further, a fundamental combination of freedom and co-operation. Everyone must feel that he is playing a part in a common human enterprise, a part that he can and will play to the best of his abilities, and for which he is essential in his own way.

At present we tend to think that freedom and co-operation are incompatible things. Individual freedom seems to stand always in opposition to the State. The answer lies not in trying to decide the issue between anarchy and order, but in revising our organization of the State and our education of the individual.

THE PRODUCTIVE MECHANISM

Good biological and social environments for human beings cannot be achieved piecemeal. Generations of reformers have attempted to do this, but while they dealt rather ineffectively with the details—providing public parks and hospitals—they left untouched the major factors that drove towards unemployment, wars and mass misery. The only way of securing a good environment is by setting up a well organized productive and distributive mechanism. Good biological and social environments are not separate things. The biological environment is secured through human work with the assistance of the knowledge given by science and the powers given by machinery. The conditions of work are the essential feature of the social environment: not only how people work in a material sense, but how they are organized to work and what they think or know they are working for. The part that people play in the productive mechanism will for a long time determine the quality of their social relations. Conversely, the very functioning of the productive apparatus, what and how much is produced, how it is produced and where it goes, depends on the form of social relationships. It is not for technical reasons, for example, that more than half of man's labour is wasted by unemployment in peace and in killing or preparing to kill other men in war. It is useless to increase productive efficiency or improve means of transport if the social control is so organized that it can only lead to such results. Any productive organization that will not lead to such results, in other words, any steadily progressive, productive organization, implies certain social conditions.

PRODUCTIVE ORGANIZATION

The setting up of a working productive organization, consciously directed to the satisfaction of human needs, is the primary social aim of this time. It implies first the negative work of crushing all social forces that tend to check the development

of the new productive forces or to divert them to destructive or limited ends. On the positive side it implies the actual planning and putting into operation of a vast interrelated set of schemes for raising human productivity to new levels, and for directing that productivity at every stage so as to satisfy human needs and enlarge human capacities. At one time the negative aspect will be the more important one, at another the positive. Thus, from 1917 to 1923 the forces of Socialism in the Soviet Union were mainly concerned in defending their newly won power against internal and external attack. Then from 1927 to June 1941 the main emphasis was on planned reconstruction of the physical and cultural standards of living. Now, once again, it is the negative aspect that predominates. The Nazis and all they stand for must be crushed, but in the midst of warfare the achievements of the constructive phase are still essential.

HUMAN NEEDS

It is far easier to aim at satisfying biological than sociological needs. We can formulate fairly accurately what the basic biological human needs are, and the steps that need to be taken to satisfy them. We have not yet reached a sufficiently advanced state of knowledge to assess accurately the social needs; but we do know enough to realize that social needs will best be satisfied in the very effort of achieving the biological ones, not only because social welfare implies an adequate biological environment, but even more because experience has shown that the very effort to obtain this environment by social collaboration results in the satisfaction of the most fundamental social needs. Society is always at its best when the people who compose it are working for a common recognized end, which enables them to collaborate and to subordinate their individual aims in an atmosphere of social approval. Except in socialist countries, only war can bring out this conscious social unity in action; and it is remarkable how easy it is psychologically to sweep away minor private interests for the sake of common welfare and how major private interests which continue to stand out against this process are becoming increasingly discredited and insecure. A common purpose has its immediate emotional effect on every individual, but that purpose can only be realized in common action—that is, by effective democracy.

DEMOCRACY

Under present-day conditions, no great enterprise can be carried out to ultimate success unless it has the willing and conscious collaboration of hundreds of groups of human beings working in different capacities. Even in Nazi Germany, an elaborate and costly propaganda apparatus is required to persuade the people falsely that they are working in this way; and the fact that that deception is becoming suspected inside the country is one of the most significant signs of the breakdown of Fascist régimes. Now the technique of working together in small groups for a purpose which extends very much further than those of the individual members or of the group itself is the essence of democracy rather than the ballot box of the party system. The difference between the new and the earlier democratic attempts is, firstly, that it is a truer democracy in that it does not depend for its existence on classes of slaves, machinery having supplied that deficit, and, secondly, that it recognizes that the individual democratic group exists and works only by virtue of belonging to a larger scheme containing many thousands of such groups, each acting in a different way for a common purpose.

The practical possibility of planned and organized production for the common good was first realized on an adequate scale in the Soviet Union. Its technical possibility throughout the world has been brought far nearer by the present war, which has forced every other large country to imitate many of its organizational methods although they are hampered in their effectiveness by existence of the vested interests of nineteenth-century capitalism.

USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

No one who has ever considered the matter would now doubt that it will be perfectly feasible to set up and get working within a few months a comprehensive productive and distributing mechanism for the whole world. The technical side of this has already been demonstrated in practice, but the possibilities go far beyond anything that has yet been achieved. By throwing the whole weight of scientific inquiry into the problems, it should certainly be possible to increase vastly the usable natural resources of power and materials. The basic requirements—food, working materials and energy—are potentially available in quantities far in excess of present needs, and indeed of the needs of a

population many times as great as the present one. Pessimistic critics of the last fifty years have continually harped on the limiting of natural resources and the danger of exhausting them if they continue to be used or wasted at the present rate. These critics have been refuted by events, as new sources have been found and new means of conserving and economizing existing ones have come forward more rapidly than the possibility of using them under the increasing restrictions of capitalist economics. In the past few years it is the problem of surplus rather than the problem of exhaustion that has become most prominent, and received the immediate and utterly foolish solution of restriction in peace and arch destruction in war. But the development of science has shown that we have found greater resources than those that can be measured in millions of tons of coal deposits or millions of kilowatt-hours of water-power. These resources lie in the methods and achieved results of science itself, in the vastly increased possibilities brought about by the expansion of scientific method in the practical field. We are, for example, on the eve of a transformation of energy sources which, by using atomic energy, will make the whole world independent of further coal or oil supplies. We can now see how to do things in such a way that natural resources such as working materials or food do not vanish irrecoverably, but go through a controlled cycle of use, scrapping, regeneration and re-use. The real resources of humanity are intellectual and social rather than material. If society can be organized so as to use its intellectual resources to the full, it need not fear material scarcity.

THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM

It is the social problem, therefore, rather than the technical one, that is critically important. Man must learn how to collaborate effectively before his material and intellectual resources can be used to produce happiness instead of misery, peace instead of war. Shallow critics have urged that the failure to achieve this is something intrinsically human, that man's social and moral sense is incapable of dealing with the problems of a mathematical and scientific age. They draw from this easy reflection the conclusion that it is necessary to return to a simpler age. Plainly, this is not happening nor likely to happen; in fact there are many good and detailed reasons for our present troubles which have nothing to

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do with man's inherent wickedness. We have, in the first place, inherited from the preceding era the social form of private appropriation of the results of social labour. A hundred years ago, Marx, practically alone among his contemporaries, was brilliant enough to see that this was bound to result in just that distortion of productive effort that we are suffering from today. We have now had ample evidence that it is impossible with modern technique to get a well-running productive and distributive mechanism operated entirely by the condition that it should furnish profit and interest to individuals contributing little or nothing to its direction or maintenance. Their greed and stupidity have brought only increased human misery without even saving their wealth or themselves in the process. These qualities are not accidental, they are the recognized basis of the economic system. Greed or stupidity would be called in official, financial or academic circles, commercial good sense and strict attention to business. There is no place in any modern social structure for such attitudes, or for the people who have inherited them with their wealth and arbitrary power.

PLANNING

The new consciousness of the unity of human society takes practical form in economic planning. Planning in this sense is the antithesis of the free market which was the ideal of the classical capitalist economists. At first sight it does not appear so different from the State and monopoly controlled economic organization of the present day. All the advantages claimed by the economist for the free market have already practically disappeared. But most of its disadvantages remain, and in addition there are many new ones characteristic of monopoly—restriction, high prices, lack of adaptability. But the planning in monopoly State capitalism, whether Fascist or plutocratic, is not a corporate attempt to obtain the best possible human conditions with the available resources. The planning that will achieve this is fundamentally different. In the first place it needs to be complete, for no plan for any individual sector or for any number of sectors is likely to achieve good results if the plans for the different sectors do not form part of one whole. The gross failures in war production and in the provision of food and necessities in this country have shown that well enough.

In the second place the plan must be socially controlled and must not attempt to protect every individual interest which enters on the productive side. Even if the whole of industrial and agricultural production in this country were co-ordinated it would be impossible to achieve anything but further restriction if the profits of each separate group had to be guaranteed. The situation of the transport system in this country which was rationalized in such a way as to preserve the vested interests of obsolete railway companies is an example of this. If the resources of modern technique are to be effectively used, it is certain that much old machinery must be scrapped and many workers in old trades will have to learn new ones. Such scrapping is really feared now because of the insecurity of the worker in our present society. It would be accepted and welcomed only under social control directed towards the general welfare of all workers.

Thirdly, no plan can be effective if it is not scientifically conceived. The attempt to use existing techniques in their present relations to each other, even if economic restrictions were removed, is bound to be grossly inefficient. The present relations of the different parts of production have grown up to satisfy the profit needs of separate interests; it is certain that they do not represent the best way of using existing resources for the benefit of the community. To find out how to do this is a scientific problem of great complexity, but it can and must be solved. The last defence of the classical economist is the claim that, bad as the system of the free market is, it does enable production to be carried on without any need to think out how much of each commodity should be produced and where and when it shall be required. This they consider an absolutely impossible task. For the past ten years, however, it has been regularly solved in the U.S.S.R., and similar tasks are being faced in wartime England, Germany and the United States. The technique exists for answering such questions by the use of statistical methods and simple calculus of variations, and practice will soon perfect it. It would be very odd that groups of intelligent and disinterested people, having available to them the combined wisdom and experience of past generations, could not do better by working consciously, than what results from unco-ordinated half-conscious guesses prompted by the greed or fear of business men lacking special training and ignorant of most of the relevant factors.

Finally, and most important of all, no plan and no productive organization will succeed in its object unless it has behind it the organized and conscious will and desire of the workers. As the productive machine grows in size and complexity in the latter stages of capitalist development, the workers in it gain in cohesion with their increase in numbers. This is particularly so in war. Between them, the workers and technicians come to realize that it is their show in fact, however it is owned and controlled. They work it, they understand it; the others only exploit and obstruct it. The workers are the people for whose benefit the whole machine is working, or should be working. How they work, and why they work, is as important as what they produce.

THE MEANING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The effectiveness of the productive machine depends on social no less than technical factors. It would be of little value unless men and women could work and change it willingly, freely and consciously. Political forms and social customs must make this possible.

In the past these were not often thought of as the establishment of human rights. The ideals for which the great struggles of the last three hundred years have been fought were summed up in the three great rights of man of the French Revolution—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. They were then claimed as absolutes. Now they appear relative to the technical and political movements of the time. Interpreted in the light of the present, they may still stand as necessary conditions for an effective productive mechanism, and, at one remove, for the provision of a good biological and sociological environment. But, though rights are conditions, their winning is not to be thought of as prior to the establishment of the productive organization. Rather do they arise out of the struggle for achieving it.

EQUALITY

For us today human equality is no longer a dogmatic assertion that all men are born equal. We know that this is not so, either in physical or in mental endowment. Nevertheless, the men who fought for equality were fighting for something real against arbitrarily imposed inequality. If equality is considered in relation

to social or productive organization, it is seen to mean that only man's functional capacity—how good he is at his job—should determine what place he takes in the general productive scheme. To bring in other considerations, such as colour, religion or relationship to a director, is to lower fatally the efficiency of the organization, firstly because it means that full use is not being made of human abilities, and secondly, because the knowledge of this gives rise to a feeling of injustice, which makes it absolutely impossible to secure the full voluntary collaboration of all workers. Every man doing his best in his own job is on that account the equal of any other.

If everyone's place is to be determined by his ability, it should clearly be determined as early as possible in order to make the fullest use of his potential ability. Equality therefore implies equal opportunities of education in the full sense, including the abolition of special advantages due to social status of the parents. The two forms of society that preceded the present, were essentially based on the exploitation of arbitrarily created inequality: in feudal society by status, in capitalist society by wealth. Capitalist society was more progressive, because, though status could not be changed, wealth could be acquired. Nevertheless, by putting the making of money, and therefore the getting of an unequal status, as its main objective, it was bound to give rise to a far greater inequality than the society it superseded. By bringing the world within one commercial orbit it indeed introduced entirely new inequalities based on race, or more accurately, on the relative degree of technical development which existed at the beginning of the industrial revolution. Racial inequality is the clearest example of the inefficient utilization of human ability. This is even consciously expressed by the colour-bar laws of South Africa, which prohibit the natives from carrying out tasks which at the same time they are alleged to be inherently incapable of undertaking. Racial inequality, further, brings its own nemesis in shrunken markets, fear of insurrection, and imperialist wars.

Another form of inequality which must be removed is that between the sexes. Once effectiveness in function is the touchstone this happens inevitably, as is shown in the war. Equal educational opportunities, equal pay for equal work, will not prevent women and men tending to do different things; and the

production and care of children is sure to claim much of the life of most women. But these will be voluntarily accepted conditions, not imposed by a society which has outgrown the full time domestic occupation of women and which is ridden with the fear of unemployment. Race and sex inequalities must go.

The society of the future cannot admit any type of imposed inequality, because in doing so it would defeat its own ends, the achievement of a good environment by efficient productive organization.

LIBERTY

Liberty is usually put forward as a purely negative social concept. It implies that men have been, or usually are, subject to conscious compulsions, whether by owners, employers or States. The establishment of liberty means the removal of these compulsions. From then on they are free: they can do what they like. This definition goes too far, and not far enough. Besides the conscious compulsions enforced by chains, whips and starvation—or the fear of these—there are unconscious compulsions which can be built into the individual's character by his social environment. These compulsions can make men, apparently of their own accord, a nation of slaves or a gang of tyrants. But liberation from all social compulsions, conscious or unconscious, is intrinsically neither desirable nor possible. Men cannot escape from society, and when they appear to do so, the result of the perversion of social values is often disastrous. Thus in the early days of capitalism, liberty meant freedom to do what one liked with one's own. But the liberty of the trader or manufacturer meant the enslavement of the worker in the plantation or the factory. Usually this difficulty in the definition of freedom is evaded by demanding that men should be free except in so far as their actions injure other people. But, apart from such obvious and unimportant examples as common assault, it is extremely difficult in practice to tell how by doing or not doing a given action one injures other people. Those responsible for building the industrial towns of the nineteenth century, for example, were injuring millions of people for many generations without any consciousness of doing so.

But even this questionable liberty of the nineteenth century bourgeois is no longer with us today. We see in country after

country the violent destruction of liberty, the open enslavement of whole peoples. The dictators who do this are merely symptoms. They would have no power if the bases of liberty had not already been undermined by the growth of monopoly and the disappearance of the independent economic man. The sanctions that secured that liberty in the English, American and French revolutions have gone. The new liberty must be for all, but it will be a different kind of liberty.

We would now consider liberty in a much more positive aspect: freedom to choose in what manner man can best fit in with the general social activity. He cannot evade some part in that activity, even if he feels anti-social or is parasitic on society; nor can he entirely determine what his part should be, for this depends on his abilities and the opportunities actually present in society. But within these limitations the choice should be his. The more a man understands how society works, the more he understands what he can do easily and well and what he will muddle and fail at, the more scope there is for his activity and initiative, and thus the more is he a free man. Freedom in a modern organized world is bound to be different from freedom in the ancient world, which simply meant the absence of slavery or serfdom: or freedom in the early capitalist world which only meant absence of restriction on profit-making. It will be an ordered and not anarchic freedom, but there will be room to choose one's place and to make a place for oneself.

No society which does not make fullest allowance for individual initiative can be productively efficient. But the way of securing that initiative must necessarily be different from what it has been in capitalist society. It must work corporatively, not individually. The initiative for change must come from the individual, but the change itself must be social and agreed on, and therefore it will be the business of the individual to persuade his fellows that the change is necessary. Indeed, the new society is bound to be one in which rapid changes and developments are continually taking place, and the scope for initiative will be very wide. There is no doubt that within the last few years far more initiative and imagination have been shown in social and productive development in the Soviet Union than in any of the countries of free capitalism. Liberty in the new world will come to mean the social acceptance of the fullest use of the capacities of every individual.

FRATERNITY

Fraternity has a strange sound in these days, and yet it is the most important of the three rights because from it the others follow. In spite of the fact that the world is now involved in the greatest and most bloody war in all its history—or rather, almost because of this—the feeling of common humanity and of the unity of human beings all over the world has never before been so strongly felt. There is little real hatred now between peoples or races, only between oppressors and oppressed. Fraternity is now felt as world wide, owing to the immediate way in which events in one part of the world affect all others. The Spaniards and the Chinese, early victims of Fascist aggression, were not unaware of each other's sufferings or of the way in which their fates were linked. The only barriers to fraternity are those implicit in earlier social systems, greed and fear arising out of conditions of exploitation. Those who knew they were getting more than their share of the world's goods feared and consequently hated their victims. National States, when they assumed the importance of monopolist industrial groups, were driven to use every device of propaganda to create national and racial antipathies between their masses of exploited subjects and those of other national States. These real and artificial hatreds have been sufficient to maintain the world in a state of insecurity and warfare for the past fifty years or more. But, paradoxically enough, it is the intensity of war itself that is likely to break them down. Common men are common victims to a situation, and as they find this out their mutual antagonisms will turn into a common determination to have done with the system that can offer them nothing better.

In a new world the driving force behind the whole productive and social organization will be the feeling of common fraternity. It is no use having an ideal system, technically and mechanically perfect, if behind it there is not a human emotional drive. In the past that drive has been the greed of the owners and the fear of the workers, but this cannot remain so. Those sanctions have worn themselves out in producing the present chaos. A new drive must be common and voluntary. Sooner or later the Communist slogan 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need' must be realized in practice, not because this is an ideal but because it is the only way in which a productive mechanism will ever work satisfactorily. Naturally this cannot come about at

once. In the social conditioning which has affected every member of present-day society, the feelings of fraternity have been limited firstly to a narrow family circle and secondly to small social groups—the trade union and sports club and old school. Not many capitalists, even in the heyday of capitalism, worked only for themselves: most worked for their families or occasionally even for the investors in their company. To widen effective fraternity, to make people work for a larger group which ultimately embraces all humanity, is an educational task which will take at least a generation or two. But it is not the education of the schools. It is the education of the experience of life itself, of the impact on people, often for the first time, of events in the outside world coming to them through the restrictions, the efforts and the miseries of war. People begin to see that we dare not risk prolonging for ever a conflict between private and public interests and that the two can come together only through a well-organized society. Fraternity is not an ideal virtue to be obtained in the distant future. It is a practical necessity for working together now to make a tolerable world.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are more than human rights: they are necessities for human survival. When the French revolutionaries cried 'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, ou la Mort', they were expressing a fact as definite as the open threat. In the present state of the world, with the new potentialities that man has acquired for himself, any infringement of these rights brings its own consequences in human misery, social disorganization and war. But human rights cannot be secured without the creation of effective productive and social organization. The winning of rights, or the safeguarding of rights already won, is now seen to be not merely a political act, but an economic and technical one as well. Without securing the basic biological and social environment, these rights become empty words. That they were not always so in the past is because then men could still rely on the modes of social and economic life inherited from the ancient world. They could still take such things as agriculture, handicrafts and trade completely for granted as the natural state of man. We can do so no longer. The mechanism of production and distribution has been transformed by a combination of technical and scientific advances. There is now no safe and stable basis for society. We must for very life understand and control its economic and political form.

T. D. KENDRICK

THE ART OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

ANGLO-SAXON art has a life of nearly seven hundred years, which is far longer than any subsequent textbook division of European art. It is obviously an immense subject, and also a difficult one; for the briefest consideration of the history of the Anglo-Saxons will suggest that their æsthetic interests are likely to be perplexingly heterogeneous and complicated; and the fact is, of course, that within the Anglo-Saxon period, and included in the general title Anglo-Saxon art, we find kinds of art so different that the gulf between them is greater than that between Romanesque and Gothic art, and between Gothic and Renaissance. To understand the point I am making it is only necessary to recall these salient and significant happenings: I. The Anglo-Saxons settled here as rude pagans from overseas. II. They were converted to Christianity (*a*) by the Celtic Church from Ireland, and (*b*) by Rome through the Augustine mission and its sequel. III. They began as seven independent little states, and they became one kingdom of England under the rule of Wessex. IV. They lost half their territory to invading pagans, the Danes, and in less than a century regained ascendancy over the lost Danelaw. V. The whole of England was lost to a succeeding host of invaders and became part of an Anglo-Scandinavian kingdom ruled by Danish kings whose court was at the West Saxon capital, Winchester.

Anglo-Saxon art, as is to be expected, was profoundly affected by these devastating happenings, and the result is that it is very difficult to give in summary a general idea of what it is like. The best way, I think, is to take some chronological cross-sections that will take us by stages through the whole period, and I select six dates.

A.D. 550. This is towards the end of the Pagan Period. The Saxons (I use the term generically to cover the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) had an art known to us only in minor antiquities (personal ornaments, pottery, weapons, and so forth), and most of them can be described as 'barbaric' in the Kensington Church

Street sense of the word. That is to say long nobbly strings of amber and garishly coloured glass beads, and boldly designed brooches with prominent paste jewels, projecting animal-head bosses and spurs, and a great deal of heavy background ornament made up of interlacing animal-forms or a patchwork of zoomorphic heads, bodies, and limbs. There is a general fondness for fantastic forms, lumpiness and close-packed decoration. The greater part of the best material was made by the Jutes of East Kent, who made liberal use of gold, garnets, lapis lazuli (or an equivalent blue glass), and amethysts, and there is no doubt that proximity to the Continent was mainly responsible for the reflection of Merovingian Frankish fashions that distinguishes this area and is responsible for this wealth. Until recently this Kentish supremacy in the crafts was unchallenged, and it seemed true that outside Kent ornaments were as a rule of gilt bronze instead of gold, and were of comparatively clumsy work; but in 1939 this view was cruelly upset when the Sutton Hoo ship-burial was discovered. This marvellous barrow near Woodbridge in Suffolk is believed to be the cenotaph of Redwald, the fourth High King of England (*d. circa* 625), and the amazing treasure piled in his honour in the funeral ship will probably be for all time this country's most remarkable archaeological exhibit. It shows us that at the very end of the Pagan Period the goldsmiths of Kent were completely eclipsed by those of the East Angles, and a very interesting point is that among the Sutton Hoo jewel-patterns is one that foreshadows a Northumbrian Christian pattern, namely that on the pair of enormous jewelled gold clasps, which have a central rectangle of geometric ornament in step-pattern garnets surrounded by a border of interlacing animals inlaid in garnets on the gold field. It looks like a page of an Irish manuscript translated into metalwork, and its importance lies in the consequent possibilities that much of the abstract ornament in northern Christian art (I shall call this presently Hiberno-Saxon art) may come from Pagan Saxon art. This conceivable link having been noted, I need say no more about the pagan background, except to observe that there was no figural art, and no naturalistic animal-studies or flowers or foliage. Everything is just hard inanimate pattern, very glittering, prickly, and close-set, and done on a small scale.

A.D. 700. The conversion to Christianity had taken place,

and we are in an age of stone churches, sculpture (the high crosses), and illuminated manuscripts. Two quite different arts exist side by side, one Hiberno-Saxon and the other Mediterranean. The first was developed by the Irish 'Columban' Church, newly arrived at Lindisfarne (635) from Iona, and this propagates with astonishing zest and skill a system of abstract ornament like that of pagan days, and even, as I say, repeats details from pagan designs. Its favourite manuscript decoration is a carpet-like spread of elaborate interlacings, animal-patterns, jewellery-designs, and trumpet-spirals, set in a geometric frame, and it is generally done in brilliant unshaded colours with plenty of light pinks, lilacs, pale greens, and lemon yellows. There is little intrusive naturalism, and occasional soft southern subjects like the Italian portraits of the Evangelists are hardened into cold lifeless patterns matching the rest of the ornament. In contrast to all this, the noble Mediterranean art introduced by the Roman mission is reflected in sculpture (a lost art since the days of Roman Britain) which gives us the imposing monumental figures on the Ruthwell and Bewcastle crosses, and also in manuscript illuminations of a classical kind with sturdy, solid heavily modelled people done in shaded colours. There were also full-size paintings brought from Rome, and Bede describes those that were put up in the Monkwearmouth and Jarrow churches by Benedict Biscop.

A.D. 800. In the middle of the eighth century, the Hiberno-Saxon style enjoyed its supreme flowering in Northumbria, and even sculptured crosses with 'Roman' subjects tend to translate the then outmoded classical work into a linear pattern-style in low relief; in the South, led by the Canterbury school of manuscript-painters, the Mediterranean art remained firmly established. At the beginning of the ninth century the impetus of the Carolingian Renaissance on the Continent gives the whole of English art a new direction. Both in the North and the South small-scale sculpture in the classical manner becomes common, a new vine-scroll and other imported details appear, and the Francophile schools of illumination adhere more closely to the classical models. Nevertheless the Hiberno-Saxon art of the North, both in its paintings and sculptures, digests this new material without serious pause or discomfort, and bravely persists, slightly changed in content, but not at all in temper.

A.D. 900. The heathen Vikings have seized the eastern half of England, and behind the Danelaw boundary Hiberno-Saxon art suffers eclipse; but though the manuscripts come to an end, the English Church in the Danelaw is not crushed out of existence, and stone crosses, increasingly barbaric in their ornament, are still erected. The Danes, with their pagan archæology of little things, at first contribute nothing important to English art; but there are traces of the Viking taste (which was only a Scandinavian variant of the Hiberno-Saxon taste) on a few monuments. In contrast to, and also in relentless opposition to, this semi-heathen area of the Danelaw stands Wessex, now supreme among the Anglo-Saxon peoples, and Wessex under Alfred the Great stands for England, an England armed to preserve the civilization of Christendom. The Carolingian classical art is fostered with only an occasional mixture of the Hiberno-Saxon elements. The court style at Winchester becomes Frankish; a new Byzantine element is introduced; and the foundations of English Romanesque are laid.

A.D. 980. The Danelaw has been reconquered by the English kings of the house of Alfred, and the classical art of western Christendom has triumphed. Hiberno-Saxon ornament survives only on the late Northumbrian crosses. The monastic reform begun by St. Dunstan has resulted in the development of the universally English 'Winchester' school of illumination with its rich paintings and delicately tinted drawings, and in the Winchester manuscripts barbaric decoration is confined to trivial initials of southern 'acanthus' origin. The main West Saxon figural style is reflected in sculptures and ivories, and the late tenth century is the age of a great art.

A.D. 1030. All England has been conquered by the Vikings and is now ruled by a Dane (Cnut) as part of an Anglo-Scandinavian kingdom. The Viking taste is now that of a triumphant invading army, and in consequence a foreign barbaric style appears. This is accompanied by a revival of Hiberno-Saxon decoration in the North, and the occasional transformation of Winchester designs into Viking patterns. Nevertheless Scandinavia has newly become Christian, and its rulers desire to appear before the world as the upholders of Christendom; so Winchester art persists fundamentally unshaken and enjoys the royal approval of the foreign kings.

This is only the barest bones of the story, and I have omitted

much that is interesting, for instance the charming fusion-styles of Mercia in the ninth century; but the outline is sufficient to enable us now to ask what special masterpieces of Anglo-Saxon art represent its most impressive achievements.

Let us consider first of all the barbaric element, and may I say here that I am now using the word barbaric not in the sense of uncouth or rustic or bad, but, as the custom is, to denote the purely insular non-classical schools of Saxon art. I think four characteristically magnificent examples are (i) the Jutish brooch from Kingston, Kent (sixth or seventh century), (ii) a 'cruciform' page of the Lindisfarne Gospels (c. 700), (iii) an Evangelist's symbol from the north English 'Echternach Gospels' (c. 750), and (iv) the Viking grave-stone from St. Paul's Churchyard, now in the Guildhall Museum (c. 1030). The Kingston brooch is a disc three and a quarter inches in diameter made of gold and with a face of gold cloisonné set with garnets and lapis lazuli. At first glance this sumptuous assembly of coloured stones seems to be the sort of thing that, if you were lucky, you might twist into being when operating a kaleidoscope; but it is really an organized geometric pattern of gems embarrassed by a background of gold cells filled by extravagantly stylized animal-patterns in beaded gold filigree; and the confusion of pattern and background is such that the total effect is just a bewildering abstract richness of coloured stones and crinkly wires. I have described it as the finest jewel ever found in the soil of England, and I have good reason to know that it is a most impressive object, because I borrowed it from the Liverpool Museum a little while ago to show as a single special exhibit in the Central Saloon of the British Museum, and when we put it there in honourable isolation it outshone everything else within thirty feet. It is far better than anything of a similar kind made on the Continent, and it shows that at this period the English had better goldsmiths than those of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, a thing few people know.

One of the best-known of the cruciform pages of the Lindisfarne Gospels continues the same system of ornament. There is a complicated geometrical frame enclosing crowded zoomorphic ribbon-style designs and trumpet-pattern spirals, and the broad bars of the frame contain a mesh of fine-spun interlace. The effect is one of endless intricacy, and, of course, the minute precision of the drawing, the sheer craftsmanship of the design, is beyond

praise: but, as a rule, too much stress is laid on this, and I am inclined to think that the principal virtue of this wonderful folio lies in the brilliant and lucid colouring that binds the vast display of gaudy detail into a single softly shining bluish maze with governing lines in a hard red.

My next example from the Northumbrian 'Echternach' manuscripts dates from the middle of the eighth century, the period of the best Hiberno-Saxon art when the barbaric reaction was at its height, and even crosses with Mediterranean figure-subjects begin to flatten into abstract patterns. We can now measure the force and virility of the manuscript style by observing its treatment of the human figure. In the Lindisfarne Gospels, as every student knows, Italian models were used for the figures of the Evangelists and were copied moderately closely, though with a certain insular hardness. But in the Echternach Gospels there are no concessions of any sort to the classical taste. The Matthew symbol is simply a pattern of stiff ribbons devoid of humane warmth and feeling, and is brilliantly and unnaturally coloured lemon yellow, purple, and red-brown, with a border of yellow, lilac, and light red interlace; furthermore, the figure is not a separate study of a man in front of a back-cloth, but is part of a single full-page composition that includes the inscription, the margin, and the parchment itself. Nothing could better reveal the aim, the mood, and the methods of our English barbaric art at its best.

The example of Viking art that I have named, the St. Paul's Churchyard gravestone, is not a work in the same tradition. It is a sculpture with an animal-subject, the combat of the Lion and the Serpent. The monument is a rectangular head-stone, two feet in width, and it was originally painted. The Great Beast is taut and strained, and his head is turned backward violently and aggressively; the serpent waves angrily before his breast, savagely entangles his forelegs, and sweeps upwards to battle with his lashing tail. As a result of the influence of English foliate patterns, these agitated entangling lines break into long tendrils with tightly curled tips that toss tempestuously in the air. The whole thing has a wild preposterous savagery, mocking its subject, but nevertheless stating it coherently. The suave inhuman deadness of the Hiberno-Saxon treatment of the Matthew symbol in the Echternach Gospels has gone. The

carving is, so to speak, stormily alive, and this is, I think, the virtue of the purest Viking art, that it disregards pattern-discipline and substitutes ferocious movement for the quiet serpentine slickness of Hiberno-Saxon work. No wonder that when a Danish king ruled at Winchester, the powerful influence of such designs should in turn disorder the luscious acanthus-patterns of the English manuscripts of the period.

In contrast to all this is the Saxon classical or Mediterranean art. I have often wondered if the conversation behind the scenes at the Synod of Whitby (664) ever touched on the subject of art, for this seems to me to have been a much more likely source of a row than the arguments on the official agenda of the debate. 'What is it supposed to be?' the Roman party would say, looking at a Columban missionary's Gospel Book picture of an Evangelist. 'Three inches of millefiori enamel, a top-knot with tin hair, and two feet walking the wrong way! Do we have to pretend to admire it?' It must have been acutely embarrassing for Wilfred, who was now a Roman, but had been brought up in the Northumbrian Church. And what in their turn did Colman and the holy monks of Lindisfarne think of imported seventh century Greek and Italian art? Dull academy stuff, I suppose.

We have here, I think, a general tendency of the English artist of the Saxon period which was to copy the foreign classical art with, as it were, a wink. It is not true, of course, of such sober initial efforts as the great crosses of Ruthwell and Bewcastle with their tremendous and impressive figures of Christ; but I am sure it is to a great extent true of much of the later work, and we have only to consider the beautiful and impertinent eighth- and ninth-century Saxon versions of the classical vine-scroll to realize that in England a classical motive, once adopted, was from that moment lost as a serious and respectable classical design. The Synod of Whitby, I may say, did not in the least extinguish Hiberno-Saxon art in the North and Midlands, and up to the period of the Viking invasions the Hiberno-Saxon was in fact better-known and more firmly established than the classical style. Even the Carolingian Renaissance made little real headway, and to see the delightfully humorous manner in which Carolingian subjects could be transformed by the native taste, you have only to look at the early ninth-century friezes at Breedon-on-the-Hill in Derbyshire.

The fact is that the central problem of Anglo-Saxon art from the beginning to the end was to achieve a satisfactory fusion between the classical and the barbaric tastes. The two are in theory irreconcilable, but in the hands of artists of complete integrity and an abounding catholic interest in beauty wherever it was to be found, they could at least approach one another, to produce, for instance, a result that possessed the tenderness and humanity and impressionism of Hellenistic painting and also the brilliant pattern-quality of barbaric work. Once only, to my mind, was such a fusion achieved in full perfection, and that is in the 'Winchester' style of illumination of the tenth and early eleventh century. This work, which is called 'Winchester' simply as a type-name, and may in fact come from any English monastery in the South, the Midlands, or the North, is primarily and in intention classical; that is to say it is a version of Carolingian and Mediterranean art, and its outstanding historical value is that it represents the noble and significant Romanesque tradition of Christendom; but the additional interest of the work is that the Continental compositions are altered in an English way in the direction of the insular style. I do not say in the direction of the Hiberno-Saxon style; I simply mean altered to be in accord with the principal excellencies of the whole corpus of British barbaric art from 'Early British' (second and first century B.C.) onwards. That is to say, setting aside the deliberate flippancies of barbaric art (making the characters play hide-and-seek in the foliage of their own frame, for instance), the Winchester artist added to his classical subject a delicately adventurous sensitiveness of line, a flickering play of soft unnatural light, and the surface crispness of a gay colour-pattern. The best Winchester pictures, then, retain their classical humanism, but possess the additional quality of super-real mystery; they are at once and without incongruity half real and half dream.

Before I praise even more warmly the peculiar English excellencies of the finest Winchester illumination, I must point out that the Continent did more than supply a stodgy original composition for the English artists to transmute into the lovely insular style. The fact is that the Continent gave us a major inspiration through the brilliant impressionist drawing of the 'Rheims' style. One principal source was the ninth-century Utrecht Psalter, which was copied by a Winchester artist about

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A.D. 1000; but it is, of course, important to note that the success of the Rheims manner in England was well nigh inevitable, for the reason that this nervous, sketchy drawing abroad provided a most acceptable solution of the English artist's main problem, and as such it was adapted and elaborated with an obvious zest. It represented a means of release from the formal stiffness of the classical tradition, and in the English scriptoria it became a sort of quick, quivering shorthand that stated the fact of the classical representation and at the same time translated it into a fluent linear surface-pattern, the effect of which was heightened by dizzily improbable colouring. The result is that even the direct copies of the scenes in the Utrecht Psalter are changed by a greater excitement and vivacity of drawing, and by a new pattern-value conferred on them through the English trick of tinting the drawings with red and green.

To show that there was direct contact between Winchester art and the Hiberno-Saxon style, I need only cite the evidence of the blue-haired St. Peter in the Missal of Robert of Jumièges, a manuscript of the period 1013-17 now at Rouen, for the Saint has a Celtic type of countenance that plainly betrays him as a relative of the personages in the St. Chad Gospels at Lichfield, the Echternach Gospels, and the Book of Kells. It is also an instructive fact that in the Copenhagen Gospels a Winchester artist obviously copied one of the Evangelist's portraits in the Lindisfarne Gospels or a closely similar design. But my feeling is that in the first instance the closest bond between Winchester illumination and the older insular style is the use of colour, and as an example of the Winchester painting that I have in mind I should like to mention a page in the most famous of the early Winchester works, the St. Etheldrythe folio of the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold (c. 980). This manuscript is not in the fully practised Rheims manner, and the figures in it are in truth rather short, stolid and heavy; but the whole thing is quickened and uplifted by its amazing colouring. The page I have named has the Saint done in gold and salmon pink, and surrounded by a prodigally rich display of acanthus foliage with brilliant pink, light blue, light purple, and light green leaves.

I am going to end by describing briefly the three illustrations of pre-Conquest Winchester work that are reproduced here. The Crucifixion painting is from the Gospels originally at Holkham

Hall and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The background is the uncoloured vellum, and the border is gold. The sky is creamy blue and white; the cross is olive green with blue shading; Christ's hair is dark red and His body is faintly sketched in light red; His tunic is blue with white high-lights. The Virgin has a blue veil and a buff gown with a pattern in primrose yellow. The donor (perhaps the Countess Judith of Flanders) at the foot of the cross wears a similarly patterned robe. The haloes, the books, and the crescents of the weeping Sun and Moon are gold.

The first of the two drawings is a little marginal sketch in dark umber and light red in the Bury St. Edmunds Psalter in the Vatican Library, a manuscript known to be later than 1012. It is an illustration to a verse in Psalm 83, 'O my God, make them [my enemies] like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.' The man falling backwards represents the overthrown enemy. The second picture is one of Sobriety and the Virtues, and is sketched in umber, red, and green. It comes from the numerous illustrations of a copy of the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

I know these descriptions are unimaginative and dull, but my purpose is to leave the three pictures to plead their own cause. All I have to say is that they are no more than average examples of Anglo-Saxon art in the eleventh century that to the best of my knowledge have never been published in England before,¹ and I want to add that many similar works exist, the majority unknown except to a very few students. I am not the right person to say much about their real significance in the full history of English art, and it seems to me sufficient here to call attention to what they really represent, the first and most felicitous achievement of a distinctively English pictorial art. I should like, however, to suggest that after the war we honour this small but precious and beautiful portion of our heritage by better publication of the material.

¹The Crucifixion painting has been published in America in the *Pierpont Morgan Library Review*, New York, 1930. Pp. vii, opp. p. 20.

MARTIN TURNELL

VIRGINIA WOOLF

It is usually taken for granted that Virginia Woolf was a distinguished novelist who happened to write a few volumes of what she modestly described as 'unprofessional criticism'. She seems to me, on the contrary, to have been essentially a literary critic who wrote novels, to have been more at home in interpreting the work of other writers than in the direct interpretation of experience. There is still a place for the *portrait littéraire* beside the grimmer productions of contemporary critics, and a writer who manages, as Mrs. Woolf managed, to combine the charm and grace of the literary portrait with criticism of the first order is rare indeed.

The Common Reader will probably be regarded not merely as her principal achievement, but as a permanent contribution to English criticism. For Mrs. Woolf's criticism contains precisely those virtues whose absence prevented her from writing a great novel. In her criticism she displayed a far greater range of imaginative sympathy than in her novels. It was based on definite standards and she was not content to rely on the shabby conceptions derived from the Liberal agnosticism of the nineteenth-century thinkers which are the stock-in-trade of her novels and account for their poverty of outlook.

'She has a stability,' wrote Mrs. Woolf of one of the heroines of *The Canterbury Tales*, 'which is only to be found where the poet has made up his mind about young women, of course, but also about the world they live in, its end, its nature, and his own craft and technique, so that his mind is free to apply its force fully to its object. It does not occur to him that his Griselda might be improved or altered. There is no blur about her, no hesitation; she proves nothing; she is content to be herself. Upon her, therefore, the mind can rest with that unconscious ease which allows it, from hints and suggestions, to endow her with many more qualities than are actually referred to. Such is the power of conviction. . . .'

'There is an unabashed tranquillity in page after page of

Wordsworth and Scott and Miss Austen which is sedative to the verge of somnolence,' she wrote. 'Opportunities occur and they neglect them. Shades and subtleties accumulate and they ignore them. They seem deliberately to refuse to gratify those senses which are stimulated so briskly by the moderns; the senses of sight, of sound, of touch—above all, the sense of the human being, his depth and the variety of his perceptions, his complexity, his confusion, his self, in short. There is little of all this in the works of Wordsworth and Scott and Jane Austen. From what, then, arises that sense of security which gradually, delightfully, and completely overcomes us? It is the power of their belief—their conviction, that imposes itself upon us. In Wordsworth, the philosophic poet, this is obvious enough. But it is equally true of the careless Scott, who scribbled masterpieces to build castles before breakfast, and of the modest maiden lady who wrote furtively and quietly simply to give pleasure. In both there is the same natural conviction that life is of a certain quality. They have their judgment of conduct. They know the relations of human beings towards each other and towards the universe. Neither of them probably has a word to say about the matter outright, but everything depends on it. Only believe, we find ourselves saying, and all the rest will come of itself. Only believe . . . that a nice girl will instinctively try to soothe the feelings of a boy who has been snubbed at a dance, and then, if you believe it implicitly and unquestioningly, you will not only make people a hundred years later feel the same thing, but you will make them feel it as literature. For certainty of that kind is the condition which makes it possible to write.'

A Room of One's Own is a disappointing book, but it contains a profound aside on a topic which has greatly exercised the minds of some of our best critics:

'For masterpieces are not single and solitary births: they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice.'

This seems to me to be of more practical value than many of the theoretical discussions on tradition that we have had. Mrs. Woolf's conclusions are not reached by argument: they are based on the direct perception of a quality which is common to all the

great writers of the past. Her criticism has none of the strain and hesitation that we feel in the novels; it has the weight and solidity that belong to the classic writer and this gives her particular judgments their finality.

Comparing Lord Macaulay and Lytton Strachey in *Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown*, she observes:

‘Again, in Mr. Strachey’s books, *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria*, the effort and strain of writing against the grain and current of the times is visible too. . . . If you compare *Eminent Victorians* with some of Lord Macaulay’s *Essays*, though you will feel that Lord Macaulay is always wrong, and Mr. Strachey always right, you will also feel a body, a sweep, a richness in Lord Macaulay’s *Essays* which show that his age was behind him; all his strength went straight into his work; none was used for purposes of concealment or of conversion.’

Her sensibility enables her to distinguish between the stability of the masters and the false stability of the popular novelists of the Edwardian period:

‘If we tried to formulate our meaning in one word,’ she writes of Bennett, Galsworthy and Wells, ‘we should say that these three writers are materialists. It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us, and left us with the feeling that the sooner English fiction turns its back upon them, as politely as may be, and marches, if only into the desert, the better for its soul. . . . His characters [she goes on of Bennett] live abundantly, even unexpectedly, but it remains to ask how do they live, and what do they live for? More and more they seem to us, deserting even the well-built villa in the Five Towns, to spend their time in some softly padded first-class railway carriage, pressing bells and buttons innumerable; and the destiny to which they travel so luxuriously becomes more and more unquestionably an eternity of bliss spent in the very best hotel in Brighton.’

She does not rely exclusively on analysis and so avoids the aridity of certain contemporary critics. There is a skilful mingling of analysis with the imaginative interpretation which was used by nineteenth-century critics as a substitute for rigorous thinking, but which when employed sparingly can be extremely effective. When, for example, she writes:

‘De Quincey, unlike some of his masters, was not at his best

in sudden majesty of phrase; his power lay in suggesting large and generalized visions; landscapes in which nothing is seen in detail; faces without features; the stillness of midnight or summer; the tumult and trepidation of flying multitudes; anguish that for ever falls and rises and casts its arms upwards in despair.' the image is not decorative; it is not a substitute for thought; it completes the work of the analyst and is wonderfully successful in giving us the 'feel' of the book.

It is a curious and ominous fact that as soon as Mrs. Woolf turned to the novel, the standards which made such criticism possible became blurred and sentimentalized:

"I often wonder," Clarissa mused in bed, over the little white volume of Pascal which went with her everywhere, "whether it is really good for a woman to live with a man who is morally her superior, as Richard is mine. It makes one so dependent. I suppose I feel for him what my mother and women of her generation felt for Christ. It just shows that one can't do without *something*."

This is from Mrs. Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*. Her first two novels are admittedly 'prentice work, but for all its shortcomings, *Night and Day* possesses merits which have not been sufficiently appreciated and which make us feel that its undoubted promise was never fulfilled. It has a depth which is lacking in the later works.¹ Its theme is not so much a conflict between two generations as the transition from the apparent security of the Edwardian period to the tragic insecurity of the post-war world. (It is interesting to notice that Mrs. Hilbery, who is one of the central figures in the book, becomes a minor character who makes a fugitive appearance at Clarissa's party in *Mrs. Dalloway*.) The rift in this mixed world is finely expressed in a passage towards the end of the book:

"These emotions have been very upsetting, naturally" [says Mr. Hilbery after a crisis among the young lovers]. His manner had regained all its suavity, and he spoke with a soothing assumption of paternal authority.

"Meanwhile, let us try to behave like civilized beings. Let us

¹In his Rede Lecture (*Virginia Woolf*, Cambridge University Press 1s. 6d.), which is an attractive tribute to a friend, Mr. E. M. Forster dismisses *Night and Day* as 'an exercise in classical realism' in which 'the style has been normalised and dulled'.

read Sir Walter Scott. What d'you say to *The Antiquary*, eh? Or *The Bride of Lammermoor*?"

'He made his own choice, and before his daughter could protest or make her escape, she found herself being turned by the agency of Sir Walter Scott into a civilized human being.

'Yet Mr. Hilbery had grave doubts, as he read, whether the process was more than skin-deep. Civilization had been very profoundly and unpleasantly overthrown that evening; the extent of the ruin was still undetermined; he had lost his temper, a physical disaster not to be matched for the space of ten years or so; and his own condition urgently required soothing and renovating at the hands of the classics.'

This suggests very well the sense of impotence of a generation which was conscious that the world was changing, but could offer no better ideal of civilization than Sir Walter Scott.

In the same novel, Mrs. Woolf speaks of 'an emotion so complex in its nature that to express it was impossible.' One of the great merits of this early novel was that it made a genuine attempt to express the strange and scarcely articulate feelings that were fermenting beneath the surface of a crumbling civilization. There are some melodramatic references to sea-gulls dashing themselves against lighted windows, but some of the attempts are extremely successful:

"After what you've said [says Katharine Hilbery to Ralph Denham], I can hardly trust you—unless you'll unsay what you've said?"

"Very well. I'm not in love with you."

"But I think you *are* in love with me. . . . As I am with you," she added casually enough. "At least," she said, slipping her ring back to its old position, "what other word describes the state we're in?"

'She looked at him gravely and inquiringly, as if in search of help.

"It's when I'm with you that I doubt it, not when I'm alone," he stated.

"So I thought," she replied.'

I think that Mrs. Woolf's later novels can be criticized on the ground that she failed to consolidate her position and that her interest in method—it is a weakness common to a number of contemporary writers—distracted her attention from the very real discoveries she had made.

Her own description of this method is well known, but as its full implications have not always been understood, I may perhaps be forgiven for drawing attention to it here:

‘Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being “like this”. Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it.’

It is worth mentioning that these words were written in 1919, two years before the publication of *Monday or Tuesday* and three years before the publication of *Jacob's Room*. In other words, the critic had formulated her theory of art some time before she put it into practice.

The theory itself was not new. It was and remains the best statement in English of some of the fundamental tenets of French Symbolism. Laforgue and Rimbaud did not speak in very different terms of the alexandrine that they were throwing overboard or of the new verse-forms that they were introducing, nor were their aims very different from Mrs. Woolf's. Her art has the same strength and the same weaknesses as theirs and the nature of the weaknesses appears in the tell-tale vagueness of phrases like ‘luminous halo’, ‘semi-transparent envelope’ and ‘unknown and uncircumscribed spirit’. It reappears constantly in her attempts to probe the deeper layers of the mind:

'... the great revelation perhaps never did come. Instead, there were little daily miracles, illuminations, matches struck unexpectedly in the dark.'

When she writes of Clarissa:

'... all in a clap it came over her, If I had married him, this gaiety would have been mine all day!'

she reminds us of Emma's sudden realization that she could never marry anyone but Mr. Knightley. But, as Mrs. Woolf has herself pointed out, in Jane Austen 'the great revelation' owes its importance to the fact that it is set against a clearly defined background of humdrum everyday emotions. Her own difficulty was to provide some sort of framework to give a true perspective to her findings. There is nothing in her novels that is comparable to the Homeric structure of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and this leads to curious subterfuges. In *Mrs. Dalloway* she tells two different stories—the story of the frivolous Society lady who married the wrong man and the violent story of the suicide of the shell-shocked Septimus Warren Smith—and the only way of linking them was the introduction of the time-theme:

'It was precisely twelve o'clock; twelve by Big Ben; whose stroke wafted over the northern part of London; blent with that of other clocks, mixed in a thin ethereal way with the clouds and wisps of smoke and died up there among the sea-gulls—twelve o'clock struck as Clarissa Dalloway laid her green dress on her bed, and the Warren Smiths walked down Harley Street. Twelve was the hour of their appointment. Probably, Rezia thought, that was Sir William Bradshaw's house with the grey motor car in front of it. (The leaden circles dissolved in the air.)'

No one will pretend that this is successful. Time is an artificial convention and it is not less embarrassing than some of the conventions of the traditional novelists that were so light-heartedly thrown over by Mrs. Woolf.

The author of *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* is a person armed with a bull's-eye lantern which lights up strange corners of the mind, but which also leaves other and not less important corners in impenetrable darkness. Take a characteristic passage from *Mrs. Dalloway*:

'Quiet descended on her, calm, content, as her needle, drawing the silk smoothly to its gentle pause, collected the

green folds together and attached them, very lightly, to the belt. So on a summer's day waves collect, overbalance, and fall; collect and fall; and the whole world seems to be saying "that is all" more and more ponderously, until even the heart all. Fear no more, says the heart. Fear no more, says the heart, in the body which lies in the sun on the beach says too, That is committing its burden to some sea, which sighs collectively for all sorrows, and renews, begins, collects, lets fall. And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the waves breaking; the dog barking, far away barking and barking.'

It is an impressive example of Mrs. Woolf's prose, but when we ask what relation it bears to the rest of the book we begin to feel uneasy. There is evidently an attempt to give significance to the feelings that are so skilfully evoked by linking the movement of Mrs. Dalloway's sewing with the waves breaking and the heart beating. But the unity seems to be imposed from without; the feelings do not of themselves possess the cosmic significance that it pleases the writer to attribute to them. For the passage is a poetical conceit; it does not hold together of its own accord; intellectual concepts are introduced to fill in gaps, to cover up a certain faintness in the original perception. So it stands out as a superb piece of virtuosity that knocks the rest of the book sideways.

We can see, too, from this passage that Mrs. Woolf is limited to a certain round of feelings—feelings suggested by the words 'calm', 'gentle pause', 'sighs collectively for all sorrows' and the nostalgic 'That is all'. She seems concerned in her later work to avoid, to shield her characters and through them herself from the more violent emotions. This accounts for her uncertainty in handling Miss Kilman.

'Also she did a little Extension Lecturing and so on. Then Our Lord had come to her (and here she always bowed her head). She had seen the light two years and three months ago. Now she did not envy women like Clarissa Dalloway: she pitied them.'

The spectacle of religious fanaticism is not altogether a pleasant one. Yet Miss Kilman raises issues with which the novelist is not competent to deal, but which she feels cannot be ignored. Miss Kilman strikes a discordant note in this polite world because, in spite of her ignorance and fanaticism, she is a challenge to its

fundamental complacency. She is a symbol of violent, underground feelings that threaten to break through the delicate technique, and this is apparent in the fumbled descriptions of her. Mrs. Woolf takes refuge in a facile and self-protective irony. Miss Kilman is represented as a figure of fun—poor, ugly, awkward, she 'stood on the landing, and wore a mackintosh; but had her reasons'.

To the Lighthouse is by common consent Mrs. Woolf's best novel. She comes nearest in this book to fixing the fleeting impressions that pass through the ordinary mind on an ordinary day, nearer than before to discovering some pattern behind our everyday experience. The time-theme is not a mere convention. It is the sense of time passing, of futility, waste and death that gives the book a certain unity, or at least an appearance of unity. When, for example, she makes one of her characters say of Mr. Ramsay:

'He had made a definite contribution to philosophy in one little book when he was only five and twenty; what came after was more or less amplification, repetition' she strikes a deeper note; but she strikes a very different note in the account of Andrew Ramsay's death in the war:

'[A shell exploded. Twenty or thirty young men were blown up in France, among them Andrew Ramsay, whose death, mercifully, was instantaneous.]'

For many of the familiar weaknesses are still there. The journey seems for once to have a goal; but though the lighthouse evidently has a symbolical value, it is not easy to say what this value is.

'... pausing there she [Mrs. Ramsay] looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her stroke, for watching them in this mood always at this hour one could not help attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw; and this thing, the long steady stroke, was her stroke. . . .'

'Again she felt, as a fact without hostility, the sterility of men, for if she did not do it nobody would do it; and so, giving herself the little shake that one gives a watch that has stopped, the old familiar pulse began beating, as the watch begins ticking one, two, three, one, two, three. And so on and so on, she repeated, listening to it, sheltering and fostering the still feeble pulse as one might guard a weak flame with a newspaper.'

There is some connection between the stroke of the Lighthouse—the long steady stroke—and the feeble movement of a watch that gives three ticks and then stops. The Lighthouse may stand for reason or, as some one suggests, male power; but its significance remains obscure and must be counted a flaw in the novel.

Mrs. Ramsay herself dominates the book, dominates it as surely after her death as during her life; but she has the characteristic weaknesses of all Mrs. Woolf's heroines. She is good, beautiful, kind; but like Mrs. Dalloway she lacks 'something central' and remains ineffectual. For she is at bottom a survival of the 'progressive' nineteenth-century woman, much concerned over the 'eternal problems' but unable to do anything about them.

'There were the eternal problems: suffering; death; the poor. There was always a woman dying of cancer even here.'

She shares their poverty of outlook as well as their concern:

'With her mind she had always seized the fact that there is no reason, order, justice: but suffering, death, the poor.'

It is a curious fact that in spite of Mrs. Woolf's interest in social problems, she was perhaps the most class-conscious of all contemporary novelists. 'The poor' were remote and slightly unreal; you might visit them and succour them, but there was no place for them in a novel.

There is the same vagueness about the description of Mrs. Ramsay's feelings as soon as she probes beneath the surface and has to abandon the familiar concepts—'suffering, death, the poor'.

'Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all the places she had not seen; the Indian plains; she felt herself pushing aside the thick leather curtain of a church in Rome. This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. They could not stop it, she thought, exulting. There was freedom, there was peace, there was, most welcome of all, a summoning together, a resting on a platform of stability.'

The 'pushing aside of the heavy leather curtain' is the only image that has the urgency of authentic experience behind it, and it underlines the vagueness of the rest of the passage—the 'limitless horizon', 'the core of darkness', the vague 'exulting', the illusory 'platform of stability'. At bottom the failure is perhaps one of imagination; life does not afford the same stimulus as literature, and sensibility is exhausted before the passage is completed.

The book leaves us with a sense of strain and uncertainty. There are isolated moments of extraordinary vividness and beauty, but the novelist has no means of co-ordinating them and they remain meaningless. There is no real conviction, no belief in life behind the book, only a pervasive sentimentality.

It would be ungenerous to dwell on the works that followed *To the Lighthouse*. The decline of Mrs. Woolf's talent is as apparent in her criticism as in her novels. In the novels method degenerates into mannerism and meaning vanishes in a cloud of words; and with the exception of a few essays, the second volume of *The Common Reader* is written at the Lytton Strachey level.

This early decline is one of the most disquieting features of contemporary literature and no one has written more penetratingly of its causes than Mrs. Woolf herself:

'Every day we find ourselves doing, saying, or thinking things that would have been impossible to our fathers. And we feel the differences which have not been noted far more keenly than the resemblances which have been very perfectly expressed. New books lure us to read them partly in the hope that they will reflect this rearrangement of our attitude—these scenes, thoughts, and apparently fortuitous groupings of incongruous things which impinge upon us with so keen a sense of novelty—and, as literature does, give it back into our keeping, whole and comprehended. . . . No age can have been more rich than ours in writers determined to give expression to the differences which separate them from the past and not to the resemblances which connect them with it. It would be invidious to mention names, but the most casual reader dipping into poetry, into fiction, into biography, can hardly fail to be impressed by the courage, the sincerity, in a word, by the widespread originality of our time. But our exhilaration is strangely curtailed. Book after book leaves us with the same sense of promise unachieved, of intellectual poverty, of brilliance which has been snatched from life but not transmuted into literature. Much of what is best in contemporary work has the appearance of being noted down under pressure, taken down in a bleak shorthand which preserves with astonishing brilliance the movements and expressions of the figures as they pass across the screen. But the flash is soon over, and there remains with us a profound dissatisfaction.'

For contemporary writers are cut off from the heritage whose importance Mrs. Woolf so often celebrated. The revolution that has taken place in our intellectual and emotional life was bound to produce original work; but only the preservation of the 'natural conviction that life is of a certain quality', in short of a tradition that enabled the writer to consolidate his findings, could have led to the writing of masterpieces. After a time the new feelings are exhausted and there is nothing to sustain the individual talent. Like Mr. Ramsay, the poet or the novelist makes a definite contribution to literature in one little book; what comes after is more or less amplification, repetition.

That is not quite the end of the story. 'The number of men,' as Mr. Ramsay's critic hastened to add, 'who make a definite contribution to anything whatsoever is very small.' *The Common Reader* is one of the finest volumes of criticism written in our time. Mrs. Woolf possessed, as practically no other modern critic does, the great critic's power of going straight to the heart of his subject, of giving the reader the atmosphere of a book. I can think of no work of criticism written in our own or any other time to which one returns with greater profit and pleasure or in which so much is said with such wit and lightness of touch. These essays are models of style; they are the perfect bedside book for anyone who hopes to become a literary critic.

In his Editorial Note to Virginia Woolf's last collection of essays (*The Death of the Moth & Other Essays*, Hogarth Press, 9s.), Mr. Leonard Woolf tells us that the essays were selected by himself from the considerable body of material which she left behind her and which is 'enough to fill three or four volumes'. Those of us who were hoping for a substantial volume of criticism which could have been put beside *The Common Reader* (First Series) will be disappointed. The book consists of twenty-eight essays and reviews which were written between 1917 and 1940. They are by no means all critical essays and the paper which gives the book its frivolous title is an example of that sham profundity which was so evident in Virginia Woolf's last novel. It is not easy to discover what principle guided the present selection or why the essays on 'Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown', 'The Leaning Tower' and Walter Sickert, which one would have been glad to have between the covers of a single book, should have been left out and the much less interesting 'Letter to a Young Poet'

included. The merits of the purely critical essays vary a good deal. There are flashes of wit and insight which remind us what a very distinguished critic she once was. 'Not one of his (George Moore's) novels is a masterpiece; they are silken tents which have no poles.' 'Horace (Walpole) showed himself not an antiquary, not a poet, not an historian, but what he was—the aristocrat of letters, the born expert who knew the sham intellect from the genuine as surely as the antiquary knew the faked genealogy from the authentic.' 'The letter writer is no surreptitious historian. He is a man of short range sensibility; he speaks not to the public at large but to the individual in private.'

It is unfortunate that they are only flashes. One is glad to have the studies of Gibbon, Henry James, Madame de Sévigné, E. M. Forster and 'The Art of Biography'; but none of them shows Mrs. Woolf quite at her best and this perhaps explains why some of the earlier papers now reprinted were omitted from both volumes of *The Common Reader*.

EUDORA WELTY

THE PETRIFIED MAN

REACH in my purse and git me a cigarette without no powder in it if you kin, Mrs. Fletcher, honey,' said Leota to her ten o'clock shampoo-and-set customer, 'I don't like no perfumed cigarettes.'

Mrs. Fletcher gladly reached over to the lavender shelf under the lavender-framed mirror, shook a hair net loose from the clasp of the patent-leather bag, and slapped her hand down quickly on a powder puff which burst out when the purse was opened.

'Why, look at the peanuts, Leota!' said Mrs. Fletcher in her marvelling voice.

'Honey, them goobers has been in my purse a week if they's been in it a day. Mrs. Pike bought them peanuts.'

'Who's Mrs. Pike?' asked Mrs. Fletcher, settling back. Hidden in this den of curling fluid and henna packs, separated by a lavender swing door from the other customers, who were being gratified in other booths, she could give her curiosity its freedom. She looked expectantly at the black part in Leota's yellow curls as she bent to light the cigarette.

'Mrs. Pike is this lady from New Orleans,' said Leota, puffing, and pressing into Mrs. Fletcher's scalp with strong red-nailed fingers. 'A friend, not a customer. You see, like maybe I told you last time, me and Fred and Sal and Joe all had us a fuss, so Sal and Joe up and moved out, so we didn't do a thing but rent out their room. So we rented it to Mrs. Pike. And Mr. Pike.' She flicked an ash into the basket of dirty towels. 'Mrs. Pike is a very decided blonde. *She* bought me the peanuts.'

'She must be cute,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Honey, "cute" ain't the word for what she is. I'm tellin' you, Mrs. Pike is attractive. She has her a good time. She's got a sharp eye out, Mrs. Pike has.'

She dashed the comb through the air, and paused dramatically as a cloud of Mrs. Fletcher's hennaed hair floated out of the lavender teeth like a small storm cloud.

'Hair fallin'.'

'Aw, Leota.'

E

'Uh-huh, commencin' to fall out,' said Leota, combing again and letting fall another cloud.

'Is it any dandruff in it?' Mrs. Fletcher was frowning, her hair-line eyebrows diving down toward her nose, and her wrinkled, beady-lashed eyelids batting with concentration.

'Nope.' She combed again. 'Just fallin' out.'

'Bet it was that last perm'nent you gave me that did it,' Mrs. Fletcher said cruelly. 'Remember you cooked me fourteen minutes.'

'You had fourteen minutes comin' to you,' said Leota with finality.

'Bound to be somethin,' persisted Mrs. Fletcher. 'Dandruff, dandruff. I couldn't 've caught a thing like that from Mr. Fletcher, could I?'

'Well,' Leota answered at last, 'you know what I heard in here yestiddy, one of Thelma's ladies was settin' over yonder in Thelma's booth gittin' a machineless, and I don't mean to insist or insinuate or anything, Mrs. Fletcher, but Thelma's lady just happ'ned to throw out—I forgotten what she was talkin' about at the time—that you was p-r-e-g., and lots of times that'll make your hair do awful funny, fall out and God knows what all. It just ain't our fault, is the way I look at it.'

There was a pause. The women stared at each other in the mirror.

'Who was it?' demanded Mrs. Fletcher.

'Honey, I really couldn't say,' said Leota. 'Not that you look it.'

'Where's Thelma? I'll get it out of her,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Now, honey, I wouldn't go and git mad over a little thing like that,' Leota said, combing hastily, as though to hold Mrs. Fletcher down by the hair. 'I'm sure it was somebody didn't mean no harm in the world. How far gone are you?'

'Just wait,' said Mrs. Fletcher, and shrieked for Thelma, who came in and took a drag from Leota's cigarette.

'Thelma, honey, throw your mind back to yestiddy if you kin,' said Leota, drenching Mrs. Fletcher's hair with a thick fluid and catching the overflow in a cold wet towel at her neck.

'Well, I got my lady half wound for a spiral,' said Thelma doubtfully.

'This won't take but a minute,' said Leota. 'Who is it you got

in there, old Horse Face? Just cast your mind back and try to remember who your lady was yestiddy who happ'm to mention that my customer was pregnant, that's all. She's dead to know.'

Thelma dropped her blood-red lips and looked over Mrs. Fletcher's head into the mirror. 'Why, honey, I ain't got the faintest,' she breathed. 'I really don't recollect the faintest. But I'm sure she meant no harm. I declare, I forgot my hair finally got combed and thought it was a stranger behind me.'

'Was it that Mrs. Hutchinson?' Mrs. Fletcher was tensely polite.

'Mrs. Hutchinson? Oh, Mrs. Hutchinson.' Thelma batted her eyes. 'Naw, precious, she come on Thursday and didn't ev'n mention your name. I doubt if she ev'n knows you're on the way.'

'Thelma!' cried Leota staunchly.

'All I know is, whoever it is 'll be sorry some day. Why, I just barely knew it myself!' cried Mrs. Fletcher. 'Jest let her wait!'

'Why? What 're you gonna do to her?'

It was a child's voice, and the women looked down. A little boy was making tents with aluminium wave pinchers on the floor under the sink.

'Billy Boy, hon, mustn't bother nice ladies,' Leota smiled. She slapped him brightly and behind her back waved Thelma out of the booth. 'Ain't Billy Boy a sight? Only three years old and already just nuts about the beauty-parlour business.'

'I never saw him here before,' said Mrs. Fletcher, still unmollified.

'He ain't been here before, that's how come,' said Leota. 'He belongs to Mrs. Pike. She got her a job but it was Fay's Millinery. He oughtn't to try on those ladies' hats, they come down over his eyes like I don't know what. They just git to look ridiculous, that's what, an' of course he's gonna put 'em on: hats. They tole Mrs. Pike they didn't appreciate him hangin' around there. Here, he couldn't hurt a thing.'

'Well! I don't like children that much,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Well!' said Leota moodily.

'Well! I'm almost tempted not to have this one,' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'That Mrs. Hutchinson! Just looks straight through you when she sees you on the street and then spits at you behind your back.'

'Mr. Fletcher would beat you on the head if you didn't have it now,' said Leota reasonably. 'After going this far.'

Mrs. Fletcher sat up straight. 'Mr. Fletcher can't do a thing with me.'

'He cant!' Leota winked at herself in the mirror.

'No siree, he can't. If he so much as raises his voice against me, he knows good and well I'll have one of my sick headaches, and then I'm just not fit to live with. And if I really look that pregnant already——'

'Well, now, honey, I just want you to know—I habn't told any of my ladies and I ain't goin' to tell 'em—even that you're losin' your hair. You just get you one of those Stork-a-Lure dresses and stop worryin'. What people don't know don't hurt nobody, as Mrs. Pike says.'

'Did you tell Mrs. Pike?' asked Mrs. Fletcher sulkily.

'Well, Mrs. Fletcher, look, you ain't ever goin' to lay eyes on Mrs. Pike or her lay eyes on you, so what diffunce does it make in the long run?'

'I knew it!' Mrs. Fletcher deliberately nodded her head so as to destroy a ringlet Leota was working on behind her ear. 'Mrs. Pike!'

Leota sighed. 'I reckon I might as well tell you. It wasn't any more Thelma's lady tole me you was pregnant than a bat.'

'Not Mrs. Hutchinson?'

'Naw, Lord! It was Mrs. Pike.'

'Mrs. Pike!' Mrs. Fletcher could only sputter and let curling fluid roll into her ear. 'How could Mrs. Pike possibly know I was pregnant or otherwise, when she doesn't even know me? The nerve of some people!'

'Well, here's how it was. Remember Sunday?'

'Yes,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Sunday, Mrs. Pike an' me was all by ourself. Mr. Pike and Fred had gone over to Eagle Lake, sayin' they was goin' to catch 'em some fish, but they didn't, a course. So we was settin' in Mrs. Pike's car, is a 1939 Dodge——'

'1939, eh,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'—An' we was gettin' us a Jax beer apiece—that's the beer that Mrs. Pike says is made right in N.O., so she won't drink no other kind. So I seen you drive up to the drugstore an' run in for just a secont, leavin' I reckon Mr. Fletcher in the car, an' come runnin'

out with looked like a perscription. So I says to Mrs. Pike, just to be makin' 'talk, 'Right yonder's Mrs. Fletcher, and I reckon that's Mr. Fletcher—she's one of my regular customers,' I says.

'I had on a figured print,' said Mrs. Fletcher tentatively.

'You sure did,' agreed Leota. 'So Mrs. Pike, she give you a good look—she's very observant, a good judge of character, cute as a minute, you know—and she says, "I bet you another Jax that lady's three months on the way".'

'What gall!' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'Mrs. Pike!'

'Mrs. Pike ain't goin' to bite you,' said Leota. 'Mrs. Pike is a lovely girl, you'd be crazy about her. Mrs. Fletcher. But she can't sit still a minute. We went to the travelin' freak show yestiddy after work. I got through early—nine o'clock. In the vacant store next door? What, you ain't been?'

'No, I despise freaks,' declared Mrs. Fletcher.

'Aw. Well, honey, talkin' about bein' pregnant an' all, you ought to see those twins in a bottle, you really owe it to yourself.'

'What twins?' asked Mrs. Fletcher out of the side of her mouth.

'Well, honey, they got these two twins in a bottle, see? Born joined plumb together—dead a course.' Leota dropped her voice into a soft lyrical hum. 'They was about this long—pardon—must of been full time, all right, wouldn't you say?—an' they had these two heads an' two faces an' four arms an' four legs, all kind of joined *here*. See, this face looked this-a-way, and the other face looked that-a-way, over their shoulder, see. Kinda pathetic.'

'Glah!' said Mrs. Fletcher disapprovingly.

'Well, ugly? Honey, I mean to tell you—their parents was first cousins and all like that. Billy Boy, git me a fresh towel from off Teeny's stack—this 'n's wringin' wet—an' quit ticklin' my ankles with that curler. I declare! He don't miss nothin'.'

'Me and Mr. Fletcher aren't one speck of kin, or he could never 've had me,' said Mrs. Fletcher placidly.

'Of course not!' protested Leota. 'Neither is me an' Fred, not that we know of. Well, honey, what Mrs. Pike liked was the pygmies. They've got these pygmies down there, too, an' Mrs. Pike was just wild about 'em. You know, the tee-niniest men in the universe? Well honey, they can just rest back on their little bohunkus an' roll around an' you can't hardly tell if they're sittin' or standin'. That'll give you some idea. They're about forty-two years old. Just suppose it was your husband!'

'Well, Mr. Fletcher is five foot nine and one-half,' said Mrs. Fletcher quickly.

'Fred's five foot ten,' said Leota, 'but I tell him he's still a shrimp, account of I'm so tall.' She made a deep wave over Mrs. Fletcher's other temple with the comb. 'Well, these pygmies are a kind of a dark brown, Mrs. Fletcher. Not bad lookin' for what they are, you know.'

'I wouldn't care for them,' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'What does that Mrs. Pike see in them?'

'Aw, I don't know,' said Leota. 'She's just cute, that's all. But they got this man, this petrified man, that ever' thing ever since he was nine years old, when it goes through his digestion, see, somehow Mrs. Pike says it goes to his joints and has been turning to stone.'

'How awful!' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'He's forty-two too. That looks like a bad age.'

'Who said so, that Mrs. Pike? I bet she's forty-two,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Naw,' said Leota, 'Mrs. Pike's thirty-three, born in January, an Aquarian. He could move his head—like this. A course his head and mind ain't a joint, so to speak, and I guess his stomach ain't, either—not yet anyways. But see—his food, he eats it, and it goes down, see, and then he digests it'—Leota rose on her toes for an instant—'and it goes out to his joints and before you can say "Jack Robinson," it's stone—pure stone. He's turning to stone. How'd you like to be married to a guy like that? All he can do, he can move his head just a quarter of an inch. A course he *looks* just terrible.'

'I should think he would,' said Mrs. Fletcher frostily. 'Mr. Fletcher takes bending exercises every night of the world, I make him.'

'All Fred does is lay around the house like a rug. I wouldn't be surprised if he woke up some day and couldn't move. The petrified man just sat there moving his quarter of an inch though,' said Leota reminiscently.

'Did Mrs. Pike like the petrified man?' asked Mrs. Fletcher.

'Not as much as she did the others,' said Leota deprecatingly. 'And then she likes a man to be a good dresser, and all that.'

'Is Mr. Pike a good dresser?' asked Mrs. Fletcher sceptically.

'Oh, well, yeah,' said Leota, 'but he's twelve-fourteen years older 'n her. She ast Lady Evangeline about him.'

'Who's Lady Evangeline?' asked Mrs. Fletcher.

'Well, it's this mind reader they got in the freak show,' said Leota. 'Was real good. Lady Evangeline is her name, and if I had another dollar I wouldn't do a thing but have my other palm read. She had what Mrs. Pike said was the "sixth mind" but she had the worst manicure I ever saw on a living person.'

'What did she tell Mrs. Pike?' asked Mrs. Fletcher.

'She told her Mr. Pike was as true to her as he could be and besides, would come into some money.'

'Humph!' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'What does he do?'

'I can't tell,' said Leota, 'because he don't work. Lady Evangeline didn't tell me near enough about my nature or anything. And I would like to go back and find some more about this boy. Used to go with this boy got married to this girl. Oh, shoot, that was about three and a half years ago, when you was still goin' to the Robert E. Lee Beauty Shop in Jackson. He married her for her money. Another fortune teller tole me that at the time. So I'm not in love with him any more, anyway, besides being married to Fred, but Mrs. Pike thought, just for the hell of it, see, to ask Lady Evangeline was he happy.'

'Does Mrs. Pike know everything about you already?' asked Mrs. Fletcher unbelievably. 'Mercy!'

'Oh yeah, I tole her ever'thing about ever'thing, from now on back to I don't know when—to when I first started goin' out,' said Leota. 'So I ast Lady Evangeline for one of my questions, was he happily married, and she says, just like she was glad I ask her, "Honey," she says, "naw, he idn't. You write down this day, March 8, 1941," she says, "and mock it down: three years from today him and her won't be occupyin' the same bed." There it is, up on the wall with them other dates—see, Mrs. Fletcher? And she says, "Child, you ought to be glad you didn't git him, because he's so mercenary." So I'm glad I married Fred. He sure ain't mercenary, money don't mean a thing to him. But I sure would like to go back and have my other palm read.'

'Did Mrs. Pike believe in what the fortune teller said?' asked Mrs. Fletcher in a superior tone of voice.

'Lord, yes, she's from New Orleans. Ever'budy in New Orleans believes ever'thing spooky. One of 'em in New Orleans before it was raided says to Mrs. Pike one summer she was goin' to go from state to state and meet some gray-headed men, and, sure

enough, she says she went on a beautician convention up to Chicago. . . .

'Oh!' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'Oh, is Mrs. Pike a beautician too?'

'Sure she is,' protested Leota. 'She's a beautician. I'm goin' to git her in here if I can. Before she married. But it don't leave you. She says sure enough, there was three men who was a very large part of making her trip what it was, and they all three had gray in their hair and they went in six states. Got Christmas cards from 'em. Billy Boy, go see if Thelma's got any dry cotton. Look how Mrs. Fletcher's a-drippin'.'

'Where did Mrs. Pike meet Mr. Pike?' asked Mrs. Fletcher primly.

'On another train,' said Leota.

'I met Mr. Fletcher, or rather he met me, in a rental library,' said Mrs. Fletcher with dignity, as she watched the net come down over her head.

'Honey, me an' Fred, we met in a rumble seat eight months ago and we was practically on what you might call the way to the altar inside of a half an hour,' said Leota in a guttural voice, and bit a bobby pin open. 'Course it don't last. Mrs. Pike says nothin' like that ever lasts.'

'Mr. Fletcher and myself are as much in love as the day we married,' said Mrs. Fletcher belligerently as Leota stuffed cotton into her ears.

'Mrs. Pike says it don't last,' repeated Leota in a louder voice. 'Now go git under the dryer. You can turn yourself on, can't you? I'll be back to comb you out. Durin' lunch I promised to give Mrs. Pike a facial. You know—free. Her bein' in the business, so to speak.'

'I bet she needs one,' said Mrs. Fletcher, letting the swing door fly back against Leota. 'Oh, pardon me.'

A week later, on time for her appointment, Mrs. Fletcher sank heavily into Leota's chair after first removing a drugstore rental book, called *Life Is Like That*, from the seat. She stared in a discouraged way into the mirror.

'You can tell it when I'm sitting down, all right,' she said.

Leota seemed preoccupied and stood shaking out a lavender cloth. She began to pin it around Mrs. Fletcher's neck in silence.

'I said you sure can tell it when I'm sitting straight on and coming at you this way,' Mrs. Fletcher said.

'Why, honey, naw you can't,' said Leota gloomily. 'Why, I'd never know. If somebody was to come up to me on the street and say, "Mrs. Fletcher is pregnant!" I'd say, "Heck, she don't look it to me".'

'If a certain party hadn't found it out and spread it around, it wouldn't be too late even now,' said Mrs. Fletcher frostily, but Leota was almost choking her with the cloth, pinning it so tight, and she couldn't speak clearly. She paddled her hands in the air until Leota wearily loosened her.

'Listen, honey, you're just a virgin compared to Mrs. Montjoy,' Leota was going on, still absent-minded. She bent Mrs. Fletcher back in the chair and, sighing, tossed liquid from a teacup onto her head and dug both hands into her scalp. 'You know Mrs. Montjoy—her husband's that premature-gray-geaded fella?'

'She's in the Trojan Garden Club, is all I know,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Well, honey,' said Leota, but in a weary voice, 'she came in here not the week before and not the day before she had her baby—she come in here the very selfsame day, I mean to tell you. Child, we was all plumb scared to death. There she was! Come for her shapoo an' set. Why, Mrs. Fletcher, in a hour an' twenty minutes she was layin' up there in the Baptist Hospital with a seb'm-pound son. It was that close a shave. I declare, if I hadn't been so tired I would have drank up a bottle of gin that night.'

'What gall,' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'I never knew her at all well.'

'See, her husband was waitin' outside in the car, and her bags was all packed an' in the back seat, an' she was all ready, 'cept she wanted her shampoo an' set. An' havin' one pain right after another. Her husband kep' comin' in here, scared-like, but couldn't do nothin' with her a course. She yelled bloody murder too, but she always yelled her head off when I give her a perm'nent.'

'She must of been crazy,' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'How did she look?'

'Shoot!' said Leota.

'Well, I can guess,' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'Awful.'

'Just wanted to look pretty while she was havin' her baby, is all,' said Leota airily. 'Course, we was glad to give the lady what she was after—that's our motto—but I bet a hour later she wasn't payin' no mind to them little end curls. I bet she wasn't thinkin'

about she ought to have on a net. It wouldn't of done her no good if she had.'

'No, I don't suppose it would,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Yeah man! She was a-yellin'. Just like when I give her her perm'nent.'

'Her husband ought to could make her behave. Don't it seem that way to you?' asked Mrs. Fletcher. 'He ought to put his foot down.'

'Ha,' said Leota. 'A lot he could do. Maybe some women is soft.'

'Oh, you mistake me, I don't mean for her to get soft—far from it! Women have to stand up for themselves, or there's just no telling. But now you take me—I ask Mr. Fletcher's advice now and then, and he appreciates it, especially on something important, like is it time for a permanent—not that I've told him about the baby. He says, 'Why dear, go ahead!' Just ask their *advice*.'

'Huh! If I ever ast Fred's advice we'd be floatin' down the Yazoo River on a houseboat or somethin' by this time,' said Leota. 'I'm sick of Fred. I tole him to go over to Vicksburg.'

'Is he going?' demanded Mrs. Fletcher.

'Sure. See, the fortune teller—I went back and had my other palm read, since we've got to rent the room agin—said my lover was goin' to work in Vicksburg, so I don't know who she could mean, unless she meant Fred. And Fred ain't workin' here—that much is so.'

'Is he going to work in Vicksburg?' asked Mrs. Fletcher. 'And—'

'Sure, Lady Evangeline said so. Said the future is going to be brighter than the present. He don't want to go, but I ain't gonna put up with nothin' like that. Lays around the house an' bulls—did bull—with that good-for-nothin' Mr. Pike. He says if he goes who'll cook, but I says I never get to eat anyway—not meals. Billy Boy, take Mrs. Grover that *Screen Secrets* and leg it.'

Mrs. Fletcher heard stamping feet go out the door.

'Is that that Mrs. Pike's little boy here again?' she asked, sitting up gingerly.

'Yeah, that's still him.' Leota stuck out her tongue.

Mrs. Fletcher could hardly believe her eyes. 'Well! How's Mrs. Pike, your attractive new friend with the sharp eyes who spreads it around town that perfect strangers are pregnant?' she asked in a sweetened tone.

'Oh, Mizziz Pike.' Leota combed Mrs. Fletcher's hair with heavy strokes.

'You act like you're tired,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Tired? Feel like it's four o'clock in the afternoon already,' said Leota. 'I ain't told you the awful luck we had, me and Fred?'

It's the worst thing you ever heard of. Maybe *you* think Mrs. Pike's got sharp eyes. Shoot, there's a limit! Well, you know, we rented out our room to this Mr. and Mrs. Pike from New Orleans when Sal an' Joe Fentress got mad at us 'cause they drank up some home-brew we had in the closet—Sal an' Joe did. So, a week ago Sat'day Mr. and Mrs. Pike moved in. Well, I kinda fixed up the room, you know—put a sofa pillow on the couch and picked some ragged robins and put in a vase, but they never did say they appreciated it. Anyway, then I put some old magazines on the table.'

'I think that was lovely,' said Mrs. Fletcher.

'Wait. So, come night 'fore last, Fred and this Mr. Pike, who Fred just took up with, was back from they said they was fishin', bein' as neither one of 'em has got a job to his name, and we was all settin' around in their room. So Mrs. Pike was settin' there, readin' a old *Startling G-Man Tales* that was mine, mind you, I'd bought it myself, and all of a sudden she jumps!—into the air—you'd 'a' thought she'd set on a spider—an' says, "Canfield"—ain't that silly, that's Mr. Pike—"Canfield, my God A'mighty," she says, "honey," she says, "we're rich, and you won't have to work." Not that he turned one hand anyway. Well, me and Fred rushes over to her, and Mr. Pike, too, and there she sets, pointin' her finger at a photo in my copy of *Startling G-Man*. "See that man?" yells Mrs. Pike. "Remember him, Canfield?" "Never forget a face," says Mr. Pike. "It's Mr. Petrie, that we stayed with him in the apartment next to ours in Toulouse Street in N.O. for six weeks. Mr. Petrie." "Well," says Mrs. Pike, like she can't hold out one secont longer, "Mr. Petrie is wanted for five hundred dollars cash, for rapin' four women in California, and I know where he is".'

'Mercy!' said Mrs. Fletcher. 'Where was he?'

At some time Leota had washed her hair and now she yanked her up by the back locks and sat her up.

'Know where he was?'

'I certainly don't,' Mrs. Fletcher said. Her scalp hurt all over.

Leota flung a towel around the top of her customer's head. 'Nowhere else but in that freak show! I saw him just as plain as Mrs. Pike. He was the petrified man!'

'Who would ever have thought that!' cried Mrs. Fletcher sympathetically.

'So Mr. Pike says, "Well whatta you know about that," an' he looks real hard at the photo and whistles. And she starts dancin' and singin' about their good luck. She meant our bad luck! I made a point of tellin' that fortune teller the next time I saw her. I said, "Listen, that magazine was layin' around the house for a month, and there was five hundred dollars in it for somebody. An' there was the freak show runnin' night an' day, not two steps away from my own beauty parlor, with Mr. Petrie just settin' there waitin'. An' it had to be Mr. and Mrs. Pike, almost perfect strangers".'

'What gall,' said Mrs. Fletcher. She was only sitting there, wrapped in a turban, but she did not mind.

'Fortune tellers don't care. And Mrs. Pike, she goes around actin' like she thinks she was Mrs. God,' said Leota. 'So they're goin' to leave tomorrow, Mr. and Mrs. Pike. And in the meantime I got to keep that mean, bad little ole kid here, gettin' under my feet ever' minute of the day an' talkin' back too.'

'Have they gotten the five hundred dollars' reward already?' asked Mrs. Fletcher.

'Well,' said Leota, 'at first Mr. Pike didn't want to do anything about it. Can you feature that? Said he kinda liked that ole bird and said he was real nice to 'em, lent 'em mōney or somethin'. But Mrs. Pike simply tole him he could just go to hell, and I can see her point. She says, "You ain't worked a lick in six months, and here I make five hundred dollars in two seconts, and what thanks do I get for it? You go to hell, Canfield," she says. So,' Leota went on in a despondent voice, 'they called up the cops and they caught the ole bird, all right, right there in the freak show where I saw him with my own eyes, thinkin' he was petrified. He's the one. Did it under his real name—Mr. Petrie. Four women in California, all in the month of August. So Mrs. Pike gits five hunderd dollars. And my magazine, and right next door to my beauty parlor. I cried all night, but Fred said it wasn't a bit of use and to go to sleep, because the whole thing was just a sort of coincidence—you know: can't do nothin' about it. He says it put

him clean out of the notion of goin' to Vicksburg for a few days till we rent out the room agin—no tellin' who we'll git this time.'

'But can you imagine anybody knowing this old man, that's raped four women?' persisted Mrs. Fletcher, and she shuddered audibly. 'Did Mrs. Pike *speak* to him when she met him in the freak show!'

Leota had begun to comb Mrs. Fletcher's hair. 'I says to her, I says, "I didn't notice you fallin' on his neck when he was the petrified man—don't tell me you didn't recognize your fine friend?" And she says, "I didn't recognize him with that white powder all over his face. He just looked familiar," Mrs. Pike says, "and lots of people look familiar." But she says that ole petrified man did put her in mind of somebody. She wondered who it was! Kep' her awake, which man she'd ever knew it reminded her of. So when she seen the photo, it all come to her. Like a flash. Mr. Petric. The way he'd turn his head and look at her when she took him in his breakfast.'

'Took him in his breakfast!' shrieked Mrs. Fletcher. 'Listen—don't tell me. I'd 'a' felt something.'

'Four women. I guess those women didn't have the faintest notion at the time they'd be worth a hundred an' twenty-five bucks apiece someday to Mrs. Pike. We ast her how old the fella was then, an' she says he musta had one foot in the grave, at least. Can you beat it?'

'Not really petrified at all, of course,' said Mrs. Fletcher meditatively. She drew herself up. 'I'd 'a' felt something,' she said proudly.

'Shoot! I did feel somethin'.' said Leota. 'I tole Fred when I got home I felt so funny. I said, "Fred, that ole petrified man sure did leave me with a funny feelin'." He says, "Funny-haha or funny-peculiar?" and I says, "Funny-peculiar." She pointed her comb into the air emphatically.

'I'll bet you did, said Mrs. Fletcher.

They both heard a crackling noise.

Leota screamed, 'Billy Boy! What you doin' in my purse?'

'Aw, I'm just eatin' these ole stale peanuts up,' said Billy Boy.

'You come here to me!' screamed Leota, recklessly flinging down the comb, which scattered a whole ash tray full of bobby pins and knocked down a row of Coca-Cola bottles, 'This is the last straw!'

'I caught him! I caught him!' giggled Mrs. Fletcher. 'I'll hold him on my lap. You bad, bad boy, you! I guess I better learn how to spank little ole bad boys,' she said.

Leota's eleven o'clock customer pushed open the swing door upon Leota paddling him heartily with the brush, while he gave angry but belittling screams which penetrated beyond the booth and filled the whole curious beauty parlor. From everywhere ladies began to gather round to watch the paddling. Billy Boy kicked both Leota and Mrs. Fletcher as hard as he could. Mrs. Fletcher with her new fixed smile.

'There, my little man!' gasped Leota. 'You won't be able to set down for a week if I knew what I was doin'.'

Billy Boy stomped through the group of wild-haired ladies and went out the door, but flung back the words, 'If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?'

SELECTED NOTICE

The Sword and the Sickle. By Mulk Raj Anand. (Cape. 9s. 6d.)

In this war we have one weapon which our enemies cannot use against us, and that is the English language. Several other languages are spoken by larger numbers of people, but there is no other that has any claim to be a world-wide *lingua franca*. The Japanese administrators in the Philippines, the Chinese delegates in India, the Indian nationalists in Berlin, are all obliged to do their business in English. Therefore, although Mr. Anand's novel would still be interesting on its own merits if it had been written by an Englishman, it is impossible to read it without remembering every few pages that it is also a cultural curiosity. The growth, especially during the last few years, of an English-language Indian literature is a strange phenomenon, and it will have its effect on the post-war world, if not on the outcome of the war itself.

This novel is a sequel to *The Village* and *Across the Black Waters*. The Sikh sepoy who has fought in France and spent years as a prisoner in Germany comes home to find himself—partly because he is suspected of disaffection and partly because that is the normal fate of all soldiers in all wars—cheated out of the reward that he had imagined that he was fighting for. The rest of the story deals mostly with the peasant movement and the beginnings of the Indian Communist Party. Now, any book about India written by an Indian must at this date almost unavoidably be the story of a grievance, and I notice that Mr. Anand has already got himself into trouble by what is wrongly described as his bitterness. In reality, the book's comparative lack of bitterness is a roundabout demonstration of the English 'bad conscience' towards India. In a novel on the

same subject by an English intellectual, what would you expect to find? An endless masochistic denunciation of his own race, and a series of traditional caricatures of Anglo-Indian society, with its unbearable club life, its chota pegs, etc., etc. In the scene as the Indian sees it, however, the English hardly enter. They are merely a permanent evil, something taken almost for granted, like the climate, and though the ultimate objective is to get rid of British rule, it is almost forgotten among the weaknesses and internecine struggles of the revolutionaries themselves. European characters barely appear in the story—a reminder that in India only about one person in a thousand is technically white—and of the few that do it cannot be said that they are treated worse than the other characters. They are not treated sympathetically either, for on the whole the characterization is harsh and derisive (to give just one example, Mr. Gandhi's head is described as resembling 'a raw purple turnip'), and the whole book is full of the Indian melancholy and of the horribly ugly, degrading scenes which offend one's eyes all the time in the starved countries of the East. Although it ends on a comparatively hopeful note this novel does not break the rule that books about India are depressing. Probably they must be so, quite apart from the question-mark they raise in the English conscience, because while the world remains in anything like its present shape the central problem of India, its poverty, is not soluble. How much of the special atmosphere of English-language Indian literature is due to its subject-matter is uncertain, but in reading Mr. Anand's work, or that of Ahmed Ali and several others, it is difficult not to feel that by this time another dialect, comparable perhaps to Irish-English, has grown up. One quotation will do to illustrate this:

'Conscious of his responsibility for the misadventures into which he had led them, Lalu bent down and strained to lever the dead bodies with trembling hands. A sharp odour of decomposing flesh shot up to his nostrils from Chandra's body, while his hands were smeared with blood from Nandu's neck. He sat up imagining the smell to be a whiff of the foul virulence of bacterial decay, ensuing from the vegetation of the forest through which they had come. But, as he bent down again, there was no disguising the stink of the corpse. And, in a flash, he realized that though Nandu's blood was hot now, it would soon be cold and the body would stink if it was carried all the way to Allahabad.'

There is a vaguely unEnglish flavour about this ('shot up to his nostrils', for instance, is not quite an English idiom), and yet it is obviously the work of a man who is not only at ease with the English language but thinks in it and would probably write in it by preference. This raises the question of the future, if any, of English-language Indian literature. At present English is to a great extent the official and business language of India: five million Indians are literate in it and millions more speak a debased version of it; there is a huge English-language Indian Press, and the only English magazine devoted wholly to poetry is edited by Indians. On average, too, Indians write and even pronounce English far better than any European race. Will this state of affairs continue? It is inconceivable that the present relationship between the two countries will last much longer, and when it vanishes the economic inducements for learning English will also tend to disappear. Presumably, therefore, the fate of the English language in Asia is either to fade out or to survive as a pidgin language

useful for business and technical purposes. It might survive, in dialect form, as the mother-tongue of the small Eurasian community, but it is difficult to believe that it has a literary future. Mr. Anand and Ahmed Ali are much better writers than the average run of English novelists, but they are not likely to have many successors. Why, then, is it that their books have at this moment an importance that goes beyond their literary merit? Partly because they are interpreting Asia to the West, but more, I think, because they act as a Westernizing influence among their own countrymen. And at present there are reasons why the second function is more important than the first.

Anyone who has to deal in propaganda knows that a sudden change came over the Indian scene as soon as Japan entered the war. Many, perhaps most, Indian intellectuals are emotionally pro-Japanese. From their point of view Britain is the enemy, China means nothing to them, Russia is an object of lip-service only. But is it the case that the Indian anti-British intelligentsia actually wishes to see China permanently enslaved, the Soviet Union destroyed, Europe a Nazi concentration camp? No, that is not fair either: it is merely that the nationalism of defeated peoples is necessarily revengeful and short-sighted. If you discuss this question with an Indian you get an answer something like this: 'Half of me is a Socialist but the other half is a Nationalist. I know what Fascism means, I know very well that I ought to be on your side, but I hate your people so much that if we can get rid of them I hardly care what happens afterwards. I tell you that there are moments when all I want is to see China, Japan and India get together and destroy Western civilization, not only in Asia, but in Europe.' This outlook is widespread among the coloured peoples. Its emotional roots are obvious enough, the various disguises in which it is wrapped are easily seen through, but it is there, and it contains a great danger, to us and to the world. The only answer to the self-pity and race-hatred common among Indians is to point out that others besides Indians are oppressed. The only answer to nationalism is international Socialism, and the contact of Indians—to a lesser extent, of all Asiatics—with Socialist literature and Socialist thought generally, is through the English language. As a general rule, Indians are reliably anti-Fascist in proportion as they are Westernized. That is why at the beginning of this review I described the English language as a weapon of war. It is a funnel for ideas deadly to the Fascist view of life. Mr. Anand does not like us very much, and some of his colleagues hate us very bitterly; but so long as they voice their hatred in English they are in a species of alliance with us, and an ultimate decent settlement with the Indians whom we have wronged but also helped to awaken remains possible.

GEORGE ORWELL



CRUCIFIXION (*Winchester Illumination*),
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York



BURY ST. EDMUNDS PSALTER
Vatican Library





GRAVESTONE from St. Paul's Cathedral, Guildhall Museum

IMAGO HOMINIS



MATTHEW SYMBOL (*Echternach Gospels*), Paris

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LETTER

ON INTERPRETING THE WAR

To the Editor,
SIR,

1st June 1942

Mr. Comfort's letter in your May issue is one of several statements I have seen which tend to set up the attitudes roughly indicated in column 2 below, against those indicated in column 1:

Patriotism	Ideology (as a substitute for patriotism)
Will to victory	Defeatism
Hope for a new order (plenty of room for ideologies here)	Cynicism or hopelessness
Concern with good and evil (primarily moral) or with good, sin and redemption (primarily religious)	Concern with clinical value, health, neurosis, and therapy (primarily scientific)

The case in favour of column 1 as against column 2 (though scientific concern with health of mind has its obvious importance) ought to speak conclusively for itself, and does so for 'the majority of Englishmen'. It is a pitiable delusion for a few among the intellectuals (blessed word) to suggest otherwise.

Starting from his own premises, Mr. Comfort has taken trouble with his argument, and he makes incidental points which are good. But he is evidently careless, like most of the *genus irritabile vatum*, in reference to fellow-poets. It is somewhat absurd to suggest that some simple patriotic verses of mine were, or attempted to be, an 'analysis' of war aims. It is even more absurd to speak of 'the Rostrevor Hamilton campaign in the *Listener* (demanding more and better pep poetry)'. At the end of certain correspondence in the *Listener* I contributed an 18-line letter to the effect that, while 'no one would suggest that all poets have a duty to write patriotic poems', it was natural to expect that some poets should do so; and I condemned as paltry the 'solemn fear or suspicion among many poets of so unsophisticated a thing as the genuine patriotic impulse', which some of the earlier contributions had seemed to illustrate. Let those whom the cap fits—I don't care how old or young—wear it. I hope I was wrong in the word 'many'.

If I had been attempting, in the one case to analyse what is obviously most complex, or in the other to 'wage a campaign', I should have wanted as much space as Mr. Comfort or more. But as for campaigning, while I regard the war as a 'struggle' (to put it mildly), I see the wordy warfare of poets as tending to be—again in Mr. Comfort's phrase—a 'degenerative process'.

Finally, let me say that I look with hope to the younger poets, and to the poetry of Mr. Comfort. A campaign against them or him is the last thing in my mind.

Yours, etc.,

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

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* Sub-Lt. G. S., R.N.V.R., was killed on active service abroad on 25th August 1947.

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